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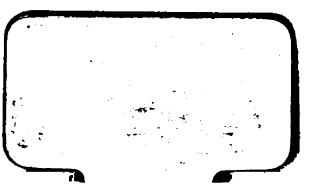

THE

MAN IN CHAINS

BY

C. J. COLLINS

AUTHOR OF "SACKVILLE CHASE," "SINGED MOTHS," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

LONDON
JOHN MAXWELL AND COMPANY
122, FLEET STREET
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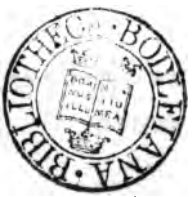
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THE MAN IN CHAINS.

CHAPTER I.

SILVESTER LANGDALE ENTRUSTS ABEL BARNES WITH A COMMISSION.

WITHIN half an hour after Abel Barnes left Gray's Inn for the City, he returned to Silvester Langdale's chambers, but he found that that gentleman had gone down to the court at the Old Bailey.

"Now, Severn, my boy," said Abel to his son, "you've been in this office long enough to know what ought to be done at a pinch in a matter of importance; so tell me, my lad, what I ought to do. You see, Mr. Langdale wants a fine hoss. He commissioned me to go and find him

one; and, Severn, my boy, I've found him one that aint to be picked up every day in the week, and all through our friend John Blagsby—you know John Blagsby of the Repository; and he said to me, says he, 'Abel, you know I wouldn't deceive you—wot's the good? we've been pals together. Look at that hoss! he was bought at Horncastle fair last week, and if he's worth a bob he's worth a hundred and fifty pound. Now it strikes me that they'll be satisfied with ninety pound at most at the hammer; so my advice to you, Abel, is, that your governor should nick him at once. Go and tell him that you've got the speech all straight, and no flies; and he ought to stand a fiver to you, Abel, for putting him fly to such a chance.' And so I've made all the haste I could back to tell Mr. Langdale. Now, Severn, you ought to know, with your education and experience in

this office, what ought to be done. Ought I to go down to the court to Mr. Langdale at once, and tell him the chance, or ought I to wait until he comes back himself? Come now, Severn, you, as must know somethin' o' the law by this time, tell me what I ought to do."

Severn Barnes promptly answered that he thought Mr. Langdale would not like Abel to go to him at the court, because everybody would see that Abel was not Mr. Langdale's clerk.

"A good idea," cried Abel Barnes, gleefully. "You're his clerk, you know; suppose you go and tell him, and I'll stop and mind shop while you're gone."

"This isn't called a shop, father," said Severn Barnes, laughing.

"Perhaps not, but it might be; and mind you, Severn, a capital shop it is, I can tell you. But what do you say to your going down to the court?"

Severn Barnes hesitated for a moment, and then observed that he did not know what to say.

"Then in that case I should go," said his burly father, decisively.

"But suppose anybody should come to see Mr. Langdale while I'm away, father?"

"Well, suppose they should; aint I here?"

"But suppose there should be a consultation wanted?" Severn Barnes suggested.

"A what?" inquired the ex-pugilist.

"A consultation."

"What do you call a consultation?" Abel Barnes inquired.

"Why, gentlemen coming to consult Mr. Langdale about the cases that he has to conduct."

"Oh, well, if that's all, you know, they can consult me, and tell me what they

want done, and I shall remember it all; so if that's all that's to be expected, it's my opinion that you'd better go down to the court at once, and tell Mr. Langdale the chance I've got for him; because, you see, if he was to let it slip, I think I should never forgive myself, Severn," said Abel Barnes, earnestly.

After considering for a moment, Severn Barnes said—

"Well, it won't take me more than twenty minutes or so to run down to the court, so I'll go; and if anybody comes, father, with any message, tell 'em to wait, as I shall be back in a few minutes."

"That's the size of it, my boy; so sharp's the word, and off you go," cried Abel Barnes, patting his son on the back.

As soon as Severn Barnes had departed on his mission, his father did what he had not previously done, although, as we know, he had been several times in those

chambers; he examined them all round, and having done so, he took his seat in Silvester Langdale's easy library chair at the table, and looked round him with an air of ludicrous importance; and he soliloquized:—

"This is what's called chambers, though there isn't a bed in it. It's rather a dingy place, to be sure. And to think that Mr. Langdale should have got all his learning in this chambers; and them's his books that he got it out of, though it's my opinion that it must have been born natural in him. And only to think, now, that with all his learning, and all he knows, I could with my left-hander knock him all of a heap like a bundle of rags,—but which I'd rather break both my arms short off than I'd try to do, or let anybody else, for the matter o' that. Lord! shouldn't I like to catch any cove trying that game on! it should be some time

afore they come up to time again. This is a nice easy chair. I ain't sat in easy chairs much myself, and that puts me in mind that I think I've got my turn o' luck at last, although I've been waiting for it long enough, it's true. Here have I got a situation with a gentleman who's got brains all the way down to the tips of his fingers; but I wonder what I'm to be called? I'm too heavy for a groom, I'm a thinkin', and I ain't up to the science of a valet. P'r'aps I shall be the butler, but there aint no cellars to the chambers, and so there wouldn't be nothing for a butler to do. P'r'aps Mr. Langdale 'll put me in livery, and I should make a stunnin' footman. Lord! I shouldn't mind having a round or two with some of 'em as I've seen up in the West End. I think I could take the starch out of a few o' the biggest on 'em, and they'd deserve it too, I know, from what little I've seen of 'em.

That big un at Lord Montalban's, for instance; now I should like to polish him off a bit. But, Lord! how I am a-running on, and talking of Lord Montalban too! How precious rum it was that he should go down to the court and give me a character! How Mary did take on about that when I told her on it, to be sure! I've never seen her took so strong before since we've been married; but she does take on sometimes, that I fancy she must almost be a little touched in the nut; but then, poor thing, it's her trouble. I've often thought that it was queer that a fine woman as she was, and a widder, should have took up with the like of me; but then, as she said often, a widder warn't in place as a barmaid in a sporting public, and at that time I was doing pretty well, though it's gone rough and tough with all of us since then. But as I observed to myself before, I do believe

that our turn o' luck has come at last, for nothing could have been more lucky than for poor Margale's insisting on sending for Mr. Langdale. I wonder whether he'll buy the hoss at once——"

Abel Barnes was prevented pursuing this speculation in his own mind by the sound of the latch-key being inserted in the keyhole of the outer door, and he very hastily rose from the easy chair in which he had been sitting, and in which he had indulged in the reverie that we have just recorded.

"Well, Barnes," cried Silvester Langdale, as he entered the room, "so you've found a horse that you think will suit me, I hear."

"A beauty, sir; and one that my friend at the repository says ain't to be picked up once in a couple o' years."

"And what is the price they ask for him?"

"He's to be sold at the hammer for what he'll fetch, sir."

"Ah! then they'll be sure to run him up to an exorbitant price, if they know we want him?" said Silvester Langdale, inquiringly, to Abel Barnes.

"Oh no, they wont, sir; I've squared all that;" and then Abel Barnes whispered to Silvester Langdale, as though he were conveying some secret in the midst of listeners. "I told him that the gentleman as wanted him was the gentleman as got me off."

"And what did he say to that?" inquired Silvester Langdale, laughing.

"He said as you must be a trump, sir, and for my sake he'd do you a out-and-out good turn, and see that the horse warn't cracked up too much."

"And when does the sale take place?"

"This afternoon, sir; they'll begin about two o'clock."

"Very good; then I will meet you at the place at two o'clock. You have ascertained that the horse has no vice?"

"John Blagsby recommended him to me for you, sir," said Abel Barnes, in a tone which indicated that such a recommendation was conclusive.

"You think I may venture to ride him at once?" Silvester inquired, rather dubiously.

"What, to hunt him at once, do you mean, sir?"

"No, no, no, I don't intend to hunt just yet; but do you think I might ride him at once in Rotten Row?"

"Sir, he'll do you a credit there, I'm sure he will; so it's my advice that you ride him right up there at once when you've bought him," cried Abel Barnes, decisively.

"I should not mind if you are quite sure that he is quiet."

"John Blagsby has said it, sir."

Abel Barnes seemed to think that his "friend in the City" was a man whose opinion, when once given, was conclusive.

"If I may be so bold, sir, I'll tell you what I would do if I was you," said Barnes, looking full into the face of Silvester Langdale.

"What's that, Barnes?"

"You ride him from the repository through the City,—just upon a walk, say; and I'll follow you all the way. I can keep up with you if you don't go into a trot at all," said Abel.

"Not a bad idea of yours, I think, Barnes;" and then laughing, Silvester Langdale added—"But we are rather fast in our arrangements; we have not got the horse yet."

"Oh, you'll have him, I'll pound it, when you see him, sir."

"Well, but as to the price, nothing has been said about that."

Abel Barnes, again speaking in a whisper, as though conveying some mysterious secret, said—

"From what John Blagsby told me, I should say you'll get him for less than a hundred. It's a out-and-out stiff price, I know; but John said he'd take his davy that the hoss was honestly worth a hundred and fifty."

"I don't mind going up to the hundred, if all you say is true about the horse," said Silvester Langdale.

It was but a few hours previously that we heard the young barrister congratulating himself that he was not reckless. Whence was born this course of extravagance that we are opening? Silvester Langdale never inquired — the inquiry never suggested itself to his mind. He was something like a bird that had just

been released and set free upon the universal air in some beautiful region of sunshine. All appeared bright before him—a cloudless sky—a brilliant scene—all Nature with her brightest charms around him, and nought but his own will to consult whither he should wing his flight amongst the glories that surrounded him.

Old Nicholas Darvill, as he sat in his high-backed, ancient chair, on the bright bricked floor of his parlour in the ancient house in the quaint city, would, if anybody had told him of the change that had so suddenly been wrought in his old pupil, have treated the intimation as a fable.

Silvester Langdale had, as we have seen in a former chapter, already forged the first link in those chains which were to hang about him in the manner which in this his history we shall trace; and he

was now about, not exactly to forge another, so much as to call into existence a strong link, which should make that which he had already produced the firmer and the more binding.

The young barrister has despatched Abel Barnes to the repository in the City, there to await his arrival, and the boy has taken himself to the place that has been appropriated to him in the little closet at the other end of the outer passage, and on the other side of Silvester Langdale's sleeping apartment, as previously alluded to, and the young barrister is alone in his chamber, in the chair so lately occupied by Abel Barnes; and he, like Abel Barnes, falls to musing, but he does not, like Abel Barnes, soliloquize upon the matters which are passing through his mind, but—as Miss Montalban did, when she was sitting at the window of the drawing-room of her father's house,

looking out upon the moving scene in the Park—he is creating a mental photograph; and the picture is one that we have already, in words in previous chapters, attempted ourselves to draw:—it is Rotten Row, in all its tinsel and glitter. He is prominent in that magnificent throng, and he is by the side of Miss Montalban, mounted upon his new purchase, and he sees the smile of gratification with which Lord Montalban's daughter looks at the steed upon which he is mounted, and admires his points; and in that smile of gratification he finds his own happiness. But then, on the instant, comes a cloud upon his brow, for the mental picture changes slightly; and, as he stands by the side of Miss Montalban, he cannot fail to observe on the other side of her, arrayed in all the glory of his faultless clothes, and with his inane smile beaming upon the young lady near

him, the form of the exquisite Marquis of Milltown. For the moment the young dreamer feels a kind of indignation towards himself, that there should be in his mind anything like annoyance from the young gadfly that is spreading its wings in the sunshine before Miss Montalban; but in that dream, that waking dream in which he is revelling in the dingy chamber of Gray's Inn, he is engendering the first taint of that dread mental malady that we call jealousy, a malady that perhaps in its effects may harden much the texture of those chains which Silvester Langdale is determined fate shall wind around him.

CHAPTER II.

SILVESTER LANGDALE IS INTRODUCED TO ABEL BARNES'S FRIEND IN THE CITY.

THERE are parts of the great City, round about its very centre, in the very midst of its roaring and its surging and its excitement, which are as obscure, and almost as unknown to the people of London generally, as though they were parts of some unvisited city in a distant land. There are lines of streets right under the shadow of St. Paul's, whose names would be recognised by few even of those who pass near them every day; and behind those streets so little known are quaint, shadowy nooks, presenting features of much in-

terest to the antiquary, and which might be pictorially presented to the world of London, and not be recognised as being a part of the great metropolis itself. Pass we along a densely crowded thoroughfare, the din of whose for ever rolling traffic strikes upon the ear with deafening clangour, and we may turn into lateral streets, narrow and overhanging, that lead us to the solitude of the dead; for down in such obscure localities of the great City we can find—hidden away, as it were, by the hand of time — small burial-places, in which long, rank, untended grass is growing over graves of the forgotten dead;—strange solitude indeed amidst the roar which the adjacent stream of life produces. In such strange spots of sepulture that are thus hidden in the City's heart, and which are surrounded by tall houses, black with age, springing from the verdure of covered

graves, are trees, that in the spring-time of the year put forth leaves that flourish for a season, but which fall from the branches long before the usual time of nature; for all their life-sap would seem to be polluted by the thick atmosphere in which they live. Whence came those trees in these burial-places in the City's heart? They are not old trees, whose roots are coeval with the time when the spot was known to all the City round. They are small, and mostly stunted, and must have been the growth of comparatively recent years. Are they the degenerate branches that have forced themselves from ancient roots that still are living beneath the shrouds of the surrounding dead? or were they planted by some City hand, in remembrance of old scenes changed and forgotten now? The archæologist, perchance, might in his researches find some records that would

tell the lives of those same trees, and whence and why they sprang; but to the casual moralist, who may without intention find himself upon the spot, they but present a contrast strange enough indeed to every other scene around. There are no monuments in these strange regions of the grave, with inscriptions glowing with the virtues of those who lie beneath; but no richer monuments than the places themselves could be erected, for they are so jammed in between the wealth-producing spots that encompass them on every side, that the material value of the ground occupied immovably in death is reckoned up in gold for every inch. Oh, yes, the unrecorded dead—for the flat slabs of stone that once were gravestones have had the records, which once they bore, obliterated by the rank vegetation that has covered them—are richly housed in the material value of their everlasting resting-place.

Silvester Langdale had to pass along some of the narrow nooks that wind so tortuously round about the precincts of a City monument, which is at once a glory and a scandal to her, albeit it is a charity; —for Christ's Hospital, in these our modern days, does not enshrine the intentions of its founder;—and the young man had to pass by the gates of one of those resting-places of the dead to which we have referred, in order to arrive at the spot at which he was to meet Abel Barnes, and effect the equine purchase upon which he was bent.

He found Abel waiting at the entrance to the establishment with which Abel Barnes's friend in the city was connected. The entrance to this establishment was an ancient gateway that appeared to be tottering, not only from the weight of years and the decrepitude of age, but from the superincumbent pressure of the

buildings above it, every story of which was out of the perpendicular. Beyond this gateway, in the interior, was a range of stables, and in front of the stables was a gravelled space, on which the horses that were for sale exhibited their steps before they were knocked down by the hammer of the auctioneer. At the end of this gravel walk was a pulpit, from which the auctioneer held forth, and plied his calling.

The sale had just commenced when Silvester Langdale reached the repository; and Abel Barnes, in presenting his patron with a catalogue, informed him that the splendid stepper from Lincolnshire was the tenth on the list.

"We'll go and look at him, sir, at once, if you like," said Abel Barnes.

"I should like very much to do so," replied Silvester Langdale.

"Then you wait here for a minute, sir, and I'll fetch Blagsby to you."

And Abel Barnes took his way to the other end of the yard, and during his absence Langdale had an opportunity of observing the company assembled in the place. All the men who were there bore the characteristics of their calling unmistakeably about them. Nobody who looked at them once could for an instant doubt that their sphere of action was the stable. Is there anything peculiar about the nature of that noble animal, the horse, which causes all persons who have any dealings with respect to him to change the outward characteristics with which nature originally endowed them? It would really seem so; but, upon consideration, we must come to the conclusion that the magnificent quadruped himself has nothing whatever to do with this strange metamorphosis, because we know that he is honest, generous, and noble, as a rule. It must, therefore, arise

out of the surroundings with which high civilization has favoured him. This must be so, because the Arab, who sleeps, eats, and drinks, and wholly lives with his horse, exhibits no similar result from such an association. Nor does the man who has all his life been dealing in pigs exhibit any special characteristic of a class in connexion therewith; for even the rags of rollicking Pat do not suggest exclusive dealings in the porcine quadruped. Again, the people who buy and sell cattle and sheep, and who do nothing else their lives through, have no special characteristics that proclaim their calling to the world.

Silvester Langdale observed that all the men who were assembled in the horse repository yard were either very short or very tall. There were none of a medium height, and every one of them carried an ash twig. Whence do they procure those

ash twigs? All horse-dealers carry them, and yet we do not remember to have observed any commercial establishment in the metropolis or elsewhere in which ash twigs were amongst the articles provided for purchasers. The horse-dealers surely cannot go into the plantations and cut the twigs for themselves, because that would be inconvenient; not that they would be deterred therefrom by any consideration with regard to the law and right of trespass, should they find themselves upon a favourable spot where they could cut their cherished stick.

The clothes of the horse-dealer have always a faded appearance, as though he were in the habit of sleeping in straw with them on, and never brushed them when he got up. He always wears a frock coat of some fashion or other; a very deep waistcoat, at the top of which s either a white or a crimson scarf,

generally of a woollen material; and he appears to have an abhorrence of a new hat. The hat of the professional horse-dealer is invariably napless, and nearly always brown, no doubt arising from the fact that it is remorselessly exposed to every kind of weather.

Silvester Langdale found himself surrounded by about forty of these interesting individuals, who were eagerly scanning the points of the animal who was then passing under the flattering encomiums of the professional gentleman in the rostrum at the end of the gravel walk.

Silvester Langdale was scrutinizing them with much interest when Abel Barnes returned in company with Blagsby.

This gentleman conspicuously exhibited all the characteristics of the fraternity of which he was a member. He was a tall, big man, rather advanced in life. His

complexion was very sallow, and his face very round. He wore a large coat which had once been brown; a striped waistcoat and large cambric neckcloth; drab small-clothes; and boots, not top-boots, which came up to his knees. He carried in his hand, of course, the ash twig, and by its instrumentality he emphasized his conversation, as at the end of every sentence he smacked the twig against the side of his boot.

Abel Barnes manifestly experienced a kind of pride in introducing this worthy to Silvester Langdale, which he did laconically enough, for he merely said—

"This is John Blagsby, sir."

The big horse-dealer put his forefinger to the rim of his hat, and he evidently did so mechanically; for every time Silvester Langdale addressed an observation to him he repeated the action, as though his elbow worked upon a spring, which

was operated upon by the person whom he was addressing.

"So I understand that you have got a good horse that you would recommend me to purchase," said Silvester Langdale, scarcely at ease in the august presence in which he found himself.

"I think he's a good un, sir," Mr. Blagsby replied, touching the rim of his hat with his forefinger, deferentially.

"And what is his colour?" Silvester inquired.

At this inquiry Mr. Blagsby's countenance displayed a kind of drooping expression, as though Mr. Langdale had put a question which was one that he would have desired to avoid; and he did partially evade it, for he turned to Abel Barnes, and said—

"Well, he's a dark bay, Abel."

This observation was made in a tone of voice which, if Mr. Blagsby had been of

an exceedingly disingenuous turn of mind, and had been little acquainted with the ways of the world and the people in it, might have created the impression that he was a very simple person. The tone was almost one of regret, as though he would infer that, to a person of Mr. Langdale's sagacity and experience, a horse being of a dark bay colour would certainly be an objection; and the observation with which Mr. Blagsby followed up the former was calculated to strengthen this inference; for, in a tone of voice that was evidently intended to deprecate an existing prejudice generally against all horses that were of a dark bay colour, he said, bringing his ash twig emphatically and with a loud smack against the side of his leg—

"But he's none the wus for that, Abel."

This assumption of simplicity on the

part of the big horse-dealer much amused Silvester Langdale, who could not help smiling, as much at the bearing of the man before him as at the notion that anybody in his senses could object to a horse being of a dark bay colour. Blagsby instantly observed the undefined smile that stole over the countenance of Silvester Langdale, and shaped his bearing accordingly.

"But it's no use talking, is it, sir?" he said to Langdale; "'coz here's the hoss himself to speak for himself, as a man may say. You'd like to go and look at him, wouldn't you, sir?"

Silvester intimated that he certainly would like to inspect the animal referred to.

"Then follow me, sir," said Blagsby; and he led the way across the yard to one of the stables on the other side. Throwing open the door, he said—

"There, sir, that's him."

It is scarcely necessary to say that Langdale was not a judge of a horse. The one before him was a very handsome one, and so he said in a whisper to Abel Barnes; and that gentleman behind his hand, whispered into Langdale's ear, that the "hoss is as good as he looks."

Of course there was no necessity for this whispering, because we may as well say at once there was no intention on the part of Blagsby to take Silvester Langdale in. He really intended to serve Abel Barnes in serving his master, as he believed; and of course there was no sinister design on the part of Abel Barnes. Mr. Blagsby knew instinctively —these men always do—that there would be whispering going on, and so he stooped down in the stall and rubbed the horse's legs down, and muttered exclamations of approval to himself, such as—

"They be very clean, out-an'-out hocks; a stunnin' forehand;" which observations, although they reached Silvester Langdale, he did not understand.

"He is certainly a very handsome horse," Silvester Langdale observed to Blagsby, as he came out of the stall.

"He's honestly worth a hundred and fifty of any man's money," said Mr. Blagsby, taking off his hat and wiping the inside thereof; for the weather was very warm, and the exertion of rubbing down the legs of the hunter had induced perspiration about Mr. Blagsby's forehead.

"Do you think he will fetch that?" Langdale inquired.

"No, I don't think he will, sir," replied Blagsby. "You see, this aint the place for a hoss like this to be sold in. These coves out here"—and he indicated the men who were in the yard bidding for

the "lots" as they were brought under the hammer—"these coves can't run the risk of buying a thing like this; it's only common hacks and screws for 'shofuls' as they speculates in."

Silvester Langdale asked what a "shoful" was.

Mr. Blagsby put his finger to the rim of his hat, and in a solemn whisper behind his hand, as though he were conveying the profoundest secret imaginable, and one that he would not trust to everybody, said,—

"Shoful means a street cab, sir."

"Oh!" said Silvester Langdale, impressed with the profundity of the communication; and then reverting to the subject in hand, he inquired what Mr. Blagsby thought the hunter would go for.

Without answering the question, Mr. Blagsby beckoned Abel Barnes to the

end of the stable, out of hearing of Silvester Langdale, and there he said to Abel,—

"What do you think the gov'nor's likely to go to?"

Abel Barnes considered for a moment, and then he said, "After what you told me this morning, which I told him—mind you, every word,—I think he'd go up to eighty."

"Humph!" mused Mr. Blagsby, "there ain't much to be got out o' that, even with the ragged lot we've got in the yard to-day. But I'll tell you what, Abel; what do you say to your gov'nor giving me eighty-five quid, and let me make the best I can out on it?"

"I'll go and ask him," replied Abel.

And he did so; and in a very few words the arrangement was made that Mr. Blagsby should receive eighty-five pounds from Mr. Langdale; and if the horse

could be got by Mr. Blagsby's agency for anything less than the eighty-five pounds, he was to keep the difference for himself.

CHAPTER III.

THE TWO REPOSITORIES, ONE IN THE CITY AND THE OTHER IN THE WEST END.

"Now then, number Ten!" shouted a voice through the door of the stable; and the next moment a functionary of the establishment, who was perspiring all over, although his attire was of the scantiest and very loosest description, rushed into the stall where the hunter was, and released the horse's head from the manger. This personage was the official whose duty it was to put the lots through their paces; that is, he ran by the side of the horse up and down the gravel walk—an occupation which may in a measure account for the state of perspiration which he exhibited when he entered the stall of the hunter. His attire consisted of a shirt, a pair of

drab small-clothes exceedingly baggy, and a pair of braces festooned behind. He, therefore, was very appropriately clad for the duty he had to perform.

Number Ten was brought out, number Ten was put through his paces, and number Ten was generally admired, but the biddings for number Ten languished. One long, wiry gentleman, who was possessed of a penetrating eye, made two or three bids for the horse, and Abel Barnes observed in a whisper to Mr. Blagsby, that "the long cove seemed to have took a fancy."

"He'll soon be choked off," Mr. Blagsby said, also in a whisper; need we add that it was behind his hand, as usual?

And the obnoxious one was "choked off," if that operation meant stopping his bids, by an observation which Mr. Blagsby incidentally dropped close in his vicinity, and in reply to a question that had been

put to him,—"That people with a out-an'-out 'unter, as was knowed in his own country, didn't send 'em to such places as Barbican to be sold; they'd send 'em to the Corner direct if there warn't a screw loose."

And so the individual aimed at was "choked off," as Mr. Blagsby had said he would be; and in two or three minutes afterwards the hunter was knocked down to some bidder in the clouds at seventy guineas, and shortly afterwards Silvester Langdale received his ticket, which was his title-deed giving him property in the noble steed that temporarily occupied stall No. 10 in the horse repository that lies under the shadow of St. Paul's.

In a distant part of the great metropolis from the quaint old repository that is placed in one of the smallest arteries of the great city's heart, another sale of horses was going on simultaneously with

the one that we have just witnessed. The sale to which we refer is taking place in the establishment of the renowned Tattersall, at Hyde Park Corner. The assembled throng thereat is of a very different character from that which congregates in the establishment of which Mr. Blagsby is the prime minister. There is an incongruous admixture in the West End gathering, for the high patrician and the low horse-dealer stand for the moment upon a footing of equality, although the distinction between them is marked enough. Horse-dealing and horse-buying would seem to have a strange levelling tendency, although unquestionably there is nothing democratic about it.

There is a sale of a well-known and extensive stud of hunters on just now at Tattersall's, and this has attracted a large gathering of the high, the influential, and the wealthy of the land. There are two

or three ministers of State amongst them, and the student of "who's who" could point out a couple of ecclesiastical dignitaries, who could expound to you the good points of a horse with as much facility and judgment as though they were discussing the prominent points of the rubric. Here are fast middle-aged men who have run through fortunes, and there are fast young men who have just come into fortunes; there are fast men who never had any fortunes at all, and who are never likely to have any; and of course there are the gentry with the ash twigs, who, however, by a strange perversity, never seem to buy anything at Tattersall's. Perhaps they only go there to gain experience of the ways of the world, of which, as a body generally, they are so lamentably ignorant.

There is a great sale on at Tattersall's, —the hunting stud of a great landowner,

who has galloped through his estate in a double sense. There is a very great throng of people of all classes who take an interest in horses, and at the moment at which we arrive there we find no little excitement amongst them,—unwonted excitement, because as a rule the frequenters of Tattersall's sale yard do not become excited overmuch. There is an unusual arrival amongst them—a most unusual arrival; for in their very midst is a young lady of brilliant personal attractions, and attired in the extreme of the mode and in costly materials. She is not unknown to the assembly there, although she has never been amongst them in that place before. But is not the name of Marie Wingrave known in all the world of fashion? Old dowagers know her, and knit their brows with indignation and curiosity when they hear her name mentioned; and young girls are all anxiety

to gaze upon her when she shows at the opera or in public places; and the heirs to vast estates are secretly in love with her when they find that she is unapproachable; and the whisper goes through all the world of fashion that she can pick and choose her coronet.

She has come to Tattersall's in prosecution of her design to become the purchaser of "Raglan," the well-known hunter, the pride of the Quorn, the beauty of Leicestershire. There is no eye that gazes on her in that strange throng that is not charmed by her beauty, and not a few of the congregation around the auctioneer's rostrum express their unfeigned admiration of "the pluck" the magnificent beauty thus exhibits in coming to that spot attended only by a simple groom. Men who have come to bid for "Raglan," falter in their intentions when they know that such is the object of the lady too,

and the auctioneer himself feels that he will have a difficult task to run up the horse against the biddings of those brilliant eyes.

And when "Raglan" is brought out, there is a space gallantly opened all round the lady, in order that she may uninterruptedly observe his movements as he is led about the yard.

The auctioneer announces that the horse has been put in at a reserved price of eight hundred pounds; will any gentleman favour him with an advance upon that price,—say guineas?

"Eight hundred guineas," exclaims the brilliant beauty.

"Eight hundred guineas are offered for the most magnificent hunter in all England," says the auctioneer. "Is there any advance upon eight hundred guineas?"

"What, bid against a lady?" cried

Marie Wingrave, with a flush of excitement. "Not if they are what I take them to be."

"Damn it, this is a fix," said a young exquisite, up in one corner of the yard, to an individual who was standing near him, and who wanted the ash twig to complete his identity; "he must go, you know," the exquisite continued in a whisper to his companion; "I cannot bid against her."

"Any advance upon eight hundred guineas?" inquired the auctioneer.

"Eight hundred and ten," cried a voice from the back of the crowd, and there was an instant opening made to see from whom the bidding had proceeded, and there was a cry of "Shame!" from one or two quarters.

"Eight hundred and twenty guineas," cried the brilliant beauty, in a tone of great excitement. "I will tire

him out," she added, "whatever he may be."

There was an involuntary cheer from several of that strange throng, and the auctioneer felt more convinced than before that he would have no little difficulty to obtain bids under the peculiar circumstances in which he found himself placed. In vain did he inquire if no one had any advance to make upon eight hundred and twenty guineas. "Going for eight hundred and twenty guineas, for the third and last time, if there is no advance made upon eight hundred and twenty guineas;" and he paused with his hammer elevated in the air, while the brilliant beauty looked with flashing eyes around her, as though she would strike down any one who dared to oppose her. And no one did oppose her, for the auctioneer finally cried, "For the third and last time, is there no advance upon eight hundred and

twenty guineas?" and the next moment the short, sharp, crisp ring of his hammer effectually answered his question.

As the magnificent beauty took her way to the office to complete her purchase, there was a look of triumph on her beautiful countenance, and the admiration of the incongruous gathering around broke out audibly as she passed along.

Her brougham was waiting at the gateway for her, and as she stepped into it she felt far less gratification in the unmistakable admiration with which she was followed, than in the knowledge that she was the uncontrolled possessor of the magnificent "Raglan."

CHAPTER IV.

SILVESTER LANGDALE MAKES A MORNING CALL.

SILVESTER LANGDALE left Abel Barnes at the repository in the City to bring away the horse that had been purchased; and when his master was gone—he having to return to the court, which was hard by—Abel took the opportunity of congratulating Mr. Blagsby upon the tidy day's work he had done in receiving eighty-five pounds for a purchase which had cost seventy guineas.

"If all the transactions in this here city was as square as this un," Mr. Blagsby observed, "the criminal animals of the country wouldn't be so precious thick as they is, Abel."

In all probability Mr. Blagsby, when

he made use of the expression, "criminal animals," meant criminal annals; but, at any rate, he made himself perfectly understood by Abel Barnes, who responded that that was quite his sentiments, and he only meant to congratulate his friend on the favourable stroke of business that he had that morning accomplished.

"It's pleasant every way," said Mr. Blagsby, philosophically. "Your guv'nor is green. In course nobody couldn't deny that, who'd see him in a repository; but I warn't a-goin' to take a mean advantage on him, arter what he's done for you, Abel; and this is the pleasant part on it, you see, he's got a stunnin' hoss at little better nor half his proper figure. I've got about a dozen quid by the transaction; nobody ain't none the wuss, and everybody's satisfied. If all that ain't pleasant to reflect upon in our line, then string me up for a jibber."

Abel Barnes looked upon his friend with admiration.

"And so you've cut the sloggin'?" Mr. Blagsby observed to Abel, as they took their way to a neighbouring public-house, at the invitation of Mr. Blagsby himself.

"Entirely," said Abel Barnes. "It ain't a good game in the long run, John; and it strikes me it ain't a first-rater at any time."

"Your new guv'nor ain't used to hunt," said Mr. Blagsby, conclusively.

"Never been across country in his life," said Abel Barnes.

"Has he got his own head entirely?" Mr. Blagsby inquired, in professional terms.

"I think so," Abel Barnes answered.

"Nobody to tighten the curb occasionally?"

Abel Barnes nodded.

"Then you ought to act the father to that young man, Abel," Mr. Blagsby exclaimed, magnanimously; "because it aint everybody as 'ud have the respect for you as I have, and it aint everybody as 'ud let the chance go by of pulling a pigeon like him as I have; is it, now?"

Abel Barnes acknowledged that Mr. Blagsby was about right.

"Then you act the father to him Abel."

And they took their way back again to the stables.

Silvester Langdale returned to the court-house; but his thoughts wandered away from the scene of his forensic triumph, recent as it was. They alternated between the purchase he had just made and the drawing-room in which, in his imagination, he could see the daughter of Lord Montalban seated.

Those who observed him as he was

seated at the barrister's table in the court —and there were many who did—thought that he was very studious; and those who had not heard him speak, but who had heard of him, believed that they could discover in his thoughtful face the manifest indications of a future greatness. Appearances are always, as we are told, fallacious; but the rule, like every other rule of general application, has its exceptions.

Silvester Langdale was not thinking of his profession at that moment. His mind's eye had gazed upon a brilliant sun, and had not recovered yet its ordinary power of vision. Fortunately, perchance, he was not engaged in any case that was likely to come on that day, although, as we have seen, his briefs had come thickly in upon him since his great *début*. Recent, however, as that was, it already seemed to him—so marked and

strong had been the change wrought in him in a few short days—a period in the distant past. As he sat in the court, to outward seeming plunged in profound thought, he was restless in himself; and so he did not remain long in his place before the jury, but took himself away towards the west. It was early afternoon; the summer sun was shining brightly from an unclouded sky, and the heat was great,—so great that people seemed to pant as they walked along the heated pavement. Silvester, like the rest of the pedestrians in the crowded streets, felt the oppressiveness of the weather as he wandered along in a kind of reverie, and so he hailed a Hansom cab, and, jumping into it, told the driver to convey him to Hyde Park, not that at the moment he had any definite object in his mind in going there. Such object, however, gradually crept upon him as he was

driven along, and when he had reached Piccadilly it had assumed the definite shape in his mind of Rotten Row, and the brilliant life-stream that, in the season, flows along it.

Yes, he would go and look upon the drive in Rotten Row as a spectator, and watch that throng in which he intended soon—such was his ambition now—to become conspicuous.

He was not reckless; he had been, as we have seen, self-congratulated upon that point; but Silvester Langdale, as we perhaps shall find, had no forethought.

He was put down at the Achilles entrance to Hyde Park, and he walked across the esplanade towards Rotten Row; and he had scarcely entered the footpath for pedestrians at the side of the road, when whom should he meet but Count Moule. They recognised each

other on the instant, and they did so cordially, each of them. Silvester Langdale did so because he had met the Count at Lord Montalban's, and the Count did so because he was cordial after a fashion towards everybody with whom he happened to be thrown in contact.

"I am just going to make a call upon our friends the Montalbans," said the Count. "What do you say to a walk thither yourself, Mr. Langdale?"

What would he say? Why, if the Count had been in possession of the faculty of reading the hearts, the aspirations, and the thoughts of men, he could not have made a suggestion that would have been more in accordance with Silvester Langdale's desires and thought, than the one he had just colloquially propounded. He did not say so in words, but his looks spoke plainly enough what his inward thoughts were, and Count

Moule could read those looks. He had in his time been a student of the thoughts of men through the agency of their countenances, and he could now with much facility read the language that, in the human face, speaks eloquently without the agency of words.

There was a wide contrast perceptible in appearance between the two, as Count Moule and Silvester Langdale took their way together along the Park. They were of about the same height, and there was a similarity of figure in the two: but the Count was forty years of age; his face was long and angular, and it appeared longer than it really was by reason of the pointed beard which he wore, and which was long and angular too, hanging from his chin like the point of a spear. The Count had a sallow complexion, and his hair was black, and so were his eyes, which seemed to be for ever restless, and

to move about without any corresponding motion of the head.

Silvester Langdale was fair and fresh-coloured in complexion, and he was only three-and-twenty years of age.

"It was rather a strange introduction that made you acquainted with Lord Montalban," said the Count, as they walked across the centre of the Park along the turf, arm-in-arm—for the Count had taken Silvester's arm with the easy familiarity of an old acquaintance.

"The circumstances were peculiar," said Silvester, "and I at least cannot regret them."

"I have known Lord Montalban for more than twenty years, but it is only of late that I have been thrown into his company much. His has been a strange life, I fancy,—at least it was so twenty years ago."

"Lord Montalban, I believe, never had but one child;" said Silvester Langdale, his mind still harping on Lord Montalban's daughter.

"Only one by the Viscountess."

Silvester Langdale looked into the face of the Count when he made this observation, as though he expected him to say something further upon the point, but he did not.

"Has Lord Montalban been married more than once?" Silvester inquired.

"Only once."

"And he had but one child?"

"By marriage."

"Ah, yes, I understand," said Silvester, with an expression of countenance which was a ludicrous admixture of the serious and the trifling.

"Of course you do," the Count observed, laughing. "You are a young man, Mr. Langdale; but every young

man of observation, I should fancy, knows the way of the world in that respect. Civilized society is an anomaly, you know."

"Many?" said Silvester Langdale, interrogatively, in reference to the subject of their conversation.

"Only one."

"Strange!"

"Not at all; it is one of the commonest things in society. Strange! Not the least; it is almost part of a national institution;" and the Count laughed as he said this.

"And is the other living?" Silvester Langdale inquired.

"I cannot answer you further, because I do not know."

"Does not Lord Montalban himself know?"

"I believe not. The affair created some little sensation here in London

some twenty years ago. The mother was, first of all, separated from the child, and then she disappeared nobody knew whither, and I believe nobody has ever known; and then some time afterwards the child disappeared too, and nobody has ever heard of it since; and I fancy that Lord Montalban has never troubled himself much about either mother or child. The case is a very common one."

"Yes! There are, however, the good instincts of our nature," said Silvester Langdale, abstractedly.

"So there are, of course, in all of us; but they are only developed by circumstances; and I do believe that, although the same instincts are born with all of us, they differ in different classes as our lives go on."

"You do not believe, then, I presume," said Silvester Langdale, "in a yearning after the unknown,—a yearning in the human breast, I mean?"

"I don't exactly, I think, understand what you mean," said the Count, looking in Silvester Langdale's face.

"Well, Count," said Langdale, with a smile, "I am entirely alone in the world. I have no blood relative, that I know of, in all this world. Do you, in such a case, believe in a yearning after the unknown—perhaps the non-existing?"

"As an instinct, I do not believe it; the feeling that you allude to in your case—for it is your own case, of course—is simply one of natural curiosity."

"Lord Montalban seems much attached to his daughter," said Silvester Langdale, changing the subject.

"She is his idol, to which he bows down in worship overy day."

"She appears worthy of such adoration," said Langdale, enthusiastically.

"But it is dangerous, very," said the Count.

"Dangerous to whom?"

"To both—to father and to daughter. The worship he has given her has laid every desire that she has ever entertained at her feet, and so she could not brook restraint if it were attempted upon her. Every impulse in her breast has now the intensity of a passion, and it would be dangerous, I fancy, for any one to thwart her. Still, even in her impulses, I believe that she might be moulded,—provided, however, that the course did not run counter to her desires."

"She did not appear to me to be very impulsive," said Langdale.

"You do not know her yet. Impulsive! she would go mad about a phantom of her own brain. And yet it is such a creature as this that I believe I could mould to my will."

They were now at the portals of Lord Montalban's house.

As Silvester Langdale ascended the staircase, he repeated to himself the words, "I believe I could mould her to my will;" and he pondered on them. They had made an instant impression upon his mind, an impression that he retained in years thereafter.

Augusta Montalban was in high spirits when she entered the room into which the Count and Silvester Langdale were shown. Silvester Langdale could see by her bearing that she was in unusual spirits, and this imparted a corresponding feeling to his own breast, for on the instant he instinctively, as it were, associated the bearing of Miss Montalban with the announcement of his own name. She was truly enough very glad to see Mr. Langdale, but it was not his visit that had imparted such a flow of spirits to the beautiful girl.

She had entered the room hastily, and

had joyously shaken hands, first with Silvester Langdale, and then with the Count.

"I am very glad you have called, Mr. Langdale," she said, "because we go to Goodwood to-morrow."

Silvester Langdale's countenance fell a little at this intimation.

"You do not take any interest in such sports, I think I recollect you said;" and she laughed, not mockingly, but rather implying regret, if such a feeling could be conveyed through the agency of a laugh. "I dare say you will think it a strange predilection for a young lady, and so no doubt it is; but I have indulged it since I was a child, and now I am old I suppose it will not depart from me."

And she laughed again—a laugh that seemed to be deprecatory of her own waywardness.

"You will not go to Goodwood, of course, Mr. Langdale?" she said.

Silvester Langdale did not think it was altogether a matter of course. He did not say so, however; what he did say was—

"I have a very strong desire to go; it is a place that I have read of so much, and have heard so much of, that I feel a strong desire to see it."

"Oh, pray then go. I am sure papa will be delighted to see you there."

You need not hesitate, Silvester Langdale. You will certainly go to Goodwood; already have you laid the flattering conviction to your soul that the feeling which Miss Montalban has just expressed on behalf of her father is simply her own disguised. You are not at this moment, young man, in a position to examine your own heart, or you would see that palpably enough.

"Well, Langdale, I'm very glad you've called," cried Lord Montalban, as he en-

tered the room.—"How are you, Count? Devilish bad run of luck last night, wasn't it?"

The Count shrugged his shoulders, and smiled expressively.

Silvester Langdale understood neither the allusion nor the smile, and both passed entirely from his mind, even while Lord Montalban was shaking hands with him.

"We go to Goodwood to-morrow," Lord Montalban said.

"So Miss Montalban has informed us," returned the Count.

"Yes; and I fancy, if you ask him, Mr. Langdale will go too," said Miss Montalban, playfully.

If Silvester Langdale had entertained any doubt upon the subject, it was entirely dispelled now, and there was no need for Lord Montalban to say that he hoped Mr. Langdale would go. He did so, however, and very heartily.

Count Moule had his thoughts upon the subject, but he did not express them. They had reference wholly to Miss Montalban. He had known her from her childhood, and he had thoroughly and truly read her character—he was an experienced scholar in readings of the kind—and he thought he had never seen her so light-hearted, even as a child. He felt some satisfaction in observing this.

"When do the races commence?" Silvester Langdale inquired.

"Oh, the meeting does not commence until Tuesday next," said Lord Montalban; "but we are going down for a day or two previously to Templebloke's."

"Not till next Tuesday?" exclaimed Langdale. "Oh, then I certainly will go down, as it will be a holiday week with me next week."

How easily is youth self-deluded! How eagerly did Silvester Langdale jump

at that after-excuse for a foregone conclusion!

Lord Montalban had taken Count Moule to the other end of the apartment, and was conversing in whispers with him; and so Silvester Langdale was placed simply under the deadly and unerring fire of those large and magnificent eyes, which sparkled with manifest pleasure as he sat within their range.

Miss Montalban was undoubtedly pleased with the society of Silvester Langdale. She had already contrasted him in her own mind with the Marquis of Milltown, and the result of that mental operation was greatly to the advantage of the young barrister. If Miss Montalban had been asked why she had instituted this comparison, she would have been wholly unable to answer the question; and yet she had made the comparison seriously and with much thought.

Oh, Silvester Langdale! if you had been aware of the fact, what would your thoughts have been? Something approaching to delirium.

Silvester Langdale had got his way to make in the world, and it was well that at that time he was not acquainted with the fact to which we have referred, with regard to Miss Montalban's mental comparison that she had instituted between himself and the Marquis of Milltown.

"What did you think of the Marquis of Milltown the other night?" Miss Montalban inquired of Silvester Langdale, rather abruptly.

"I thought him a most magnificent lay figure," replied Silvester Langdale.

There could be no doubt that there was something slightly malicious in the remark, but Miss Montalban laughed at it.

"Perhaps he himself would consider

that the highest compliment you could pay him," she said.

"I never saw anything so perfect—out of a frame," Langdale said, with the same malice prepense.

"You will see him under a new phase at Goodwood."

"Will he be of your party?" Silvester Langdale inquired, with just the slightest tinge perhaps of anxiety.

"Oh, yes; I believe he will be at Lord Templebloke's. Lord Milltown will stay at Lord Templebloke's, wont he, papa?" Miss Montalban cried to her father, at the other end of the room.

"Oh, yes; but he does not go down until Tuesday morning."

* * * * *

As Silvester Langdale rode back in a Hansom cab to his dreary chambers in Gray's Inn, he thought quite as much of the Marquis of Milltown as Miss Mon-

talban; and for the life of him he could not dissociate them in his own mind, and he felt quite annoyed with himself. He had already conceived a hearty contempt for the Marquis of Milltown, and yet he could not help wishing that the Marquis was not going to Goodwood.

CHAPTER V.

SILVESTER LANGDALE MAKES AN ENGAGEMENT WITH A PROFESSOR.

SEVERN BARNES had duly informed the leader of the band at the music hall that Mr. Silvester Langdale, his new employer, had desired to see that professional gentleman, but upon what subject the boy was unable to say. It seemed like a mysterious message to the leader of the band, and therefore he promptly attended to it, and the next morning he presented himself to Silvester Langdale in Gray's Inn.

The leader of the band was a round, stout man, with a full round countenance, rather warm in complexion, certain points

upon it being tipped with vermilion, as though he had run against some coloured composition which had left impressions upon the most prominent parts of the face. He had a sparkling, merry eye, which twinkled beneath a broad and rather massive forehead, which was prominently rounded off at each side. He wore a surtout coat, which, being buttoned all the way up, and being tight all round the body, gave his figure a creased appearance, as though he had been scored all round with concentric rings.

Mr. Victor Spaltok had been long before the public in his professional capacity, and had frequently had to bow his acknowledgments, bâton in hand, when the orchestra over which he presided had given the last flourish to the overture with which the nightly performance which he directed always commenced. Mr. Spaltok's occupation was anything but a

stationary one; for sometimes he was to be found as the leader of the orchestra in a theatre, at others he would be the conductor of fashionable concerts in the west; occasionally he would be travelling with a grand opera company in the provinces, which generally was a profitable tour, until the grand opera company came to the inevitable quarrel as to the division of the proceeds, when the troupe would be broken up and scattered, and Mr. Spaltok would return to the metropolis, and take the first eligible engagement that offered. And he was never without an engagement, because Mr. Spaltok, besides being a thorough and accomplished musician, was a talented original composer and a very expert adapter. His fingers, which were all thick and pulpy, seemed to jingle as you looked at them; and having already got the rings upon his fingers—which he had in profusion,—those who knew him

well would not have been much surprised if they had heard bells upon his toes; for undoubtedly, like the interesting young lady in the nursery rhyme, he had music wherever he went.

Mr. Spaltok was not only perfectly at his ease when he was introduced to Silvester Langdale, but he was quite free and easy, as though he had been an old acquaintance of the young barrister. He took the chair that Silvester offered him as though he had been striking a chord on the piano, for his action appeared to sweep the chair as he took his seat in it. And this suggestive professional action was still more striking when he ran his fingers of each hand through his hair, for it was as though he were dashing off a *preludium* on a grand piano.

Silvester Langdale was the first to introduce the subject of the interview which he had sought with Mr.

Victor Spaltok, and he did so by saying,—

"I am very happy to see you, Mr. Spaltok. I have sent for you upon a little professional matter."

Mr. Spaltok bowed profoundly and inquiringly.

"You know my young clerk here, Severn Barnes, of course?"

Mr. Spaltok said he thought he knew him as well as anybody in London did,—as well as his own father did, perhaps.

"And what is your opinion with regard to his vocal powers?" Silvester Langdale inquired.

"Organ magnificent, but cultivation diabolical," Mr. Spaltok answered, laconically.

"With regard to the cultivation, I can of my own knowledge form no opinion," said Silvester Langdale; "but I am

quite of your opinion that the organ the boy has got is a magnificent one."

"But then what's the use? His friends can do nothing for him in the shape of education; and as to a professional man taking the matter in hand, with a view to future profits, once bitten twice shy, Mr. Langdale. I've developed fine organs, and when the days of celebrity have come, they've snapped their fingers at me, and remorselessly kicked the ladder down."

Mr. Spaltok did not say this in anything like a tone of irritation; on the contrary, he laughed, as though he were reciting a very good practical joke.

"It isn't more than six months ago," he continued, "that a young hussy"—and when he said "young hussy" he laughed again—"that a young hussy gave me the slip by getting married, and then laughing in my face."

Silvester Langdale smiled, an invitation to Mr. Spaltok to proceed, and be a little more explanatory.

"She had a splendid organ," continued Mr. Spaltok. "She came in our chorus first; but I soon found out the rich voice she had got, so I waited on her father, who was a journeyman baker living up in Camden Town, and proposed to him to article his daughter to me for three years,—my remuneration to be half the proceeds of her engagements after that time for seven years. He jumped at the idea, of course, and the engagement was entered into. In two years I made her a first-class vocalist. I got her an engagement at a theatre in London, and she completely took the town. But in two months after that, although she was not eighteen then, a fellow picked her up and married her, and all my pains went for nothing; for in my agreement there

was no provision for such a contingency as marriage. And so I found myself done—Yes, done unmistakably brown, Mr. Langdale, and no mistake at all about it."

And Mr. Spaltok laughed again, as though he seemed to enjoy the recollection of having been done, and "done unmistakably brown" too. He would seem to have conceived the impression that Silvester Langdale had sent for him upon some such proposition, that he intended to make as that which had led to the operations that had been performed upon himself, and which he characterized as being done brown—unmistakably brown; for he said,—

"So you see, Mr. Langdale, as I said before, once bit twice shy. Now the tooth has been put into me more than once, so that I may say that I am doubly shy. Severn Barnes has got a magnifi-

cent organ, there's no doubt; but I'm afraid it 'll be like the flower that's born to blush unseen, he'll have to waste its sweetness on the desert air in a chorus."

"That is, if I rightly comprehend you," said Silvester Langdale, smiling, "you would rather not take any more pupils upon speculation as to future profits."

"Mr. Langdale," said the musician, "I've made up my mind never to trust to musical people again; what I do, I'll do for myself; but I have found these vocalists upstart and ungrateful. The adulations they get spoils them, I suppose. So that I am afraid I can't serve you by taking this young Severn Barnes up. I dare say I should have done so years ago, before I knew as much as I do now, and the probability is that he would have turned out as all the rest have done."

"But why have you assumed that I

wish you to take up Severn Barnes, as you have expressed it?" Silvester Langdale inquired, smiling.

A new light broke upon Mr. Victor Spaltok, and it beamed through his rubicund countenance.

"Perhaps you intend to take him up yourself, sir?" suggested Mr. Spaltok deferentially, and energetically performing the *preludium* upon his hair.

"I have some such intention," Silvester Langdale said. "I have conceived a great interest for the boy. I became connected with him under circumstances that will probably link us together for our lives, and hence I take a profound interest in his welfare."

"Sir, it does you honour," said Mr. Victor Spaltok; "it is quite romantic, and would make a plot for an opera."

Silvester Langdale smiled at the professional view which Spaltok took of the

matter, and said, "The boy has informed me, Mr. Spaltok, that he has already profited by some casual instruction that you have given him; do you feel inclined to extend those instructions upon terms to be agreed upon?"

"'Else wherefore breathe I in a Christian land?' as 'Richard' says," replied Mr. Spaltok, elevating his shoulders, and smiling blandly.

"Very good; I think the boy is likely to make his way in the world as a vocalist," said Silvester.

"I'm convinced of it," said Mr. Spaltok, decisively; "and I believe, Mr. Langdale, that if any man can fashion the monster, I can do it."

"Fashion the what?" exclaimed Silvester, in a tone of unmitigated surprise.

"Oh, I forgot; you don't understand our technical terms: we in the operatic profession have signs and terms that we

understand well enough amongst ourselves, but which I have no doubt must appear rather obscure to those who are not acquainted with them." And Mr. Spaltok again performed the *preludium* on his hair. "A young, inexperienced vocalist, and the words of an opera before they have been wedded to the music, we call the 'monster.'"

"Well, but why, in the name of sense?"

"Well, I can scarcely tell you, Mr. Langdale," Mr. Spaltok replied, hesitatingly. "I suppose it is because—well, a—they are both in the monster state, and we have to lick them into shape. I suppose that is it; but really I do not know. All I know is, that that is what we call them, and the people in our profession very well understand it."

"Then if I wrote the libretto of an opera, and sent it to you to write the music to it, you would say that you had

received the monster?" said Silvester Langdale, evidently much amused.

"Exactly so," replied Mr. Spaltok, emphatically.

"And if I sent a young lady to you to commence instruction with a view to the lyric stage, you would also say that you had received the monster?" And Silvester Langdale laughed in spite of himself.

"Just so," answered Mr. Victor Spaltok, with much animation; "and perhaps, after all, although the appellation may sound ludicrous enough in your ear, if you knew as much as I do, Mr. Langdale, you would not think it inappropriate."

"Very well, then, Mr. Victor Spaltok, I wish you to take this young monster in hand," said Langdale, laughing; "and I have no doubt that, with due care and efficient cultivation, the monster may be converted into a very pleasing object.

Now what are your terms for effecting the conversion of this monster?"

"In order to turn him out well, Mr. Langdale," Mr. Victor Spaltok said, very seriously, "he ought to have daily lessons of an hour each."

"I should think he ought," Silvester Langdale acquiesced.

"Well, then, for a daily lesson of an hour, Sundays excepted of course, I should require—let me see." And Mr. Victor Spaltok considered for a moment. "Perhaps, Mr. Langdale, you will allow me to turn the matter over in my mind, and I will let you know to-morrow, in writing."

"Very good," said Langdale; "of course it is well not to do a thing inconsiderately. Be it so; let me know what you propose to-morrow."

"I will do so, Mr. Langdale; and I agree with you, sir, that I think we may

probably turn out a celebrity in this young Barnes," said Mr. Victor Spaltok. "Do you know his father, Mr. Langdale?".

"Oh, yes; he is in my service too."

"Eh!" cried Mr. Victor Spaltok, elevating his eyebrows.

"Yes, he is in my service; and I have every confidence that I shall find in him a very faithful servitor," said Silvester Langdale.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Victor Spaltok.

"I suppose you feel a little surprise that I should have taken a prizefighter into my service—eh, is that it?"

"Well, Mr. Langdale, that was somewhere about the mark," observed Mr. Victor Spaltok.

"I dare say when the world generally is made acquainted with the fact, the surprise will be as general;—no matter.

Then you will inform me of your decision to-morrow, Mr. Spaltok?"

"To-morrow without fail, Mr. Langdale," said Mr. Spaltok, reverentially, for he looked upon Mr. Silvester Langdale as a kind of patron now.

As he rose to take his leave, Mr. Spaltok inquired if Mr. Langdale had "visited our place."

By "our place," Mr. Spaltok meant the music-hall whose musical arrangements he had the honour of directing. It was called the Hall of Minstrels, and was duly licensed for the performance of music and the dispensing of spirits; and a very admirably conducted establishment it was, situated in a densely-populated quarter, in which it had been of very considerable benefit in its improving and softening influence upon the denizens of the neighbourhood. The poet of all time has assured us of the power of music, and of

the soothing influence which it exercises. The music-halls of the metropolis will take the place of the tap-room, and will be socially beneficial in many ways. The frequenter of the tap-room has little regard to his personal appearance therein, but that same person in the glittering music-hall, surrounded by dazzling light and a large infusion in the assembly of the softer sex, is induced to be more circumspect with regard to his appearance; and such a feeling being engendered, he becomes socially better gradually in many respects.

Silvester Langdale said he had not yet visited the establishment over which Mr. Victor Spaltok, as musical director, presided; but he certainly intended to avail himself of an early opportunity of doing so.

"I think you will be gratified, sir," said Mr. Victor Spaltok, somewhat proudly;

"we perform the newest and the oldest music, and I flatter myself that our chorus is not surpassed by the opera itself."

"If they are all like our young friend outside, I should say that it is not equalled by the opera itself."

"Oh, I would not say that they are all equal to him," Mr. Victor Spaltok said.

His opinion of young Severn Barnes had undergone a considerable change in a few hours. Yesterday the boy was the son of an unfortunate prize-fighter, to-day he was the *protégé* of a rising professional man, who was himself making a noise in the world. Circumstances do unquestionably affect opinions, even upon abstract questions, in the minds of the best-intentioned people. Mr. Victor Spaltok felt strongly now that young Barnes ought to have a lift, and be brought out if possible.

Mr. Victor Spaltok took his leave of

Silvester Langdale with a profound bow, and as soon as he was gone the young man rang the bell on his table, and it was immediately answered.

"Well, Severn, my boy," Silvester Langdale said, "I have just seen Mr. Victor Spaltok."

"Yes, sir; I saw him come and I saw him leave."

"He appears to be a good musician."

"I believe, sir, that he could sit down at the piano, and strike off a beautiful melody or compose a new song quicker than I could whistle it after he had written it," said Severn Barnes, quite fervently. "He is a wonderful composer, sir."

"A composer, eh? Why, he did not say anything about that to me this morning."

"Oh no, sir; he does not talk about it much himself."

"I think you said that he had already given you some instruction."

"Yes, sir, with the others in the chorus."

"Oh, not more than that? Well, I think I have partly made an arrangement with him to educate you specially as a vocalist."

"Oh, sir!" cried the boy, clasping his hands, and his eyes glistening as he spoke.

"You would like to be a professional vocalist, I suppose," said Silvester Langdale, smiling kindly upon his temporary young clerk.

"Yes, sir, for mother's sake and for father's," said the boy, with a strong inclination to cry.

"The feeling does you honour, Severn; I shall not fail to remember it. You will be placed under Mr. Victor Spaltok's charge as a pupil, and I hope that you will rise into eminence."

The boy gave way to his impulses, rushed up to the young barrister, seized his hand, and, fervently kissing it, burst into a flood of tears.

Silvester Langdale was very nearly driven into the melting mood too.

"Good lad, good lad," he said; "I like you for thinking of your father and mother."

"I only wish that uncle was alive too, sir," said the boy, almost hysterically.

"I wish he were," sighed Silvester Langdale; and then added, in a different tone: "You will commence your instructions immediately, and in after years I hope you will not forget the lessons of your youth."

"If I do, sir, may something bad fall upon me!" cried the boy, very earnestly.

In after years Silvester Langdale remembered those words vividly.

CHAPTER VI.

GOODWOOD AT SUNRISE.

In all the realm of England there is not a more magnificent domain than Goodwood, the ancestral seat of the lord of Lennox. It is diversified by hill and dale, and richly wooded as by a painter's pencil; and in the distance, as seen from the elevated points, shining like a mirror, the sea forms a brilliant frame to the landscape it encloses.

The Goodwood race meeting is always held in the first week in August, when the country all around is in its brightest glory. At such a time the scene is one of sylvan beauty, over which the breath

of heaven appears to have spread its influence, and nature seems to sit upon a throne above a realm that is rich in wood, rich in pasture, and widely rich in corn.

And there is an admixture of the glories of nature and the embellishment of art in Goodwood delightfully blended. A visit to Goodwood at the time of the year when its world-renowned race meeting is being celebrated would be of advantage to the cynical, the heartless, the hypocritical, and the evil-disposed; because such a scene at such a time could have nought else but a softening influence even upon the most rugged nature of the genus man.

Goodwood is one of the ancestral glories of England. A spreading and an ample domain, umbrageous undulations, fertile plains, frequent valleys, and a princely mansion, are the features of a natural

picture which no other country in the world can display in such richness and such beauty.

And Goodwood Park on the race days presents a scene which is unique, and which probably will never be equalled of its kind. The characteristics of a public festival and a private pleasure-party are so blended, that a picture of English society is produced which stands alone in its colouring and its effect. The patrician and the peasant, the man of the world and the pleasure-seeker, rank, beauty, fashion, and all that is bright and gay, are so associated, that the mind, through the eye, becomes enrapt in its contemplation.

Yes, a visit to this same Goodwood in the autumn-time is a joy which goes to the heart's depth, and leaves an impression there which comes out bright and green amidst winter scenes, and by

Christmas fires when the yule log burns brightly.

Lord Montalban and his daughter had been down in the neighbourhood for some days, and Augusta Montalban had thoroughly enjoyed her rides on horseback over to Chichester and Bognor, and sometimes as far as Portsmouth, and she had been admired by all the country round for her equestrian prowess. She had risen soon after daybreak, in order to ride over from Lord Templebloke's house, where she and her father were staying, to the racecourse that is situated on the other side of Goodwood Park, so that she might see the horses go through their daily exercises there, preparatory to the events in which they were engaged during this race week at Goodwood; and she would watch them eagerly as they galloped over the course,—some in their clothes and some without; and her eyes

dilated with pleasure as she gazed upon them.

Of course she was very curious to see her favourite "Peeping Tom" out in his exercise of a morning, and she was all anxiety when she was informed that he was coming. A great number of horses were out, and they were so thickly clustered together on the hill and about the long course, that it was impossible for Miss Montalban to particularize them without the assistance of a guide. Such guide happened to be in attendance upon her in the shape of one of Lord Templebloke's grooms, who seemed to be well up in turf knowledge and all matters connected with the racing celebrities of the day. It was the possession of these qualifications probably that had induced Miss Montalban to elect him as her attendant squire in her excursions every morning at cockcrow to the racecourse at Goodwood.

This worthy had obtained special information, so he said, from a friend of his, "which was a tout by perfession," that "Peeping Tom" was to be brought out rather late in the morning, in order to have a rattling gallop "on the quiet," as Miss Montalban's equerry expressed it, —the precise meaning of the expression "on the quiet," being, we presume, that the gallop would be taken when the other horses had left for their stables. This was on the morning of the first day of the race meeting, and Miss Montalban was determined to see the final exercise gallop of "Peeping Tom" before his approaching contest, and she had been informed by her chaperon that for the purpose she must go down to the stand, and thither she went. After waiting for some time, the object of her anxiety made his appearance all alone in his glory, without an attendant even, save the boy upon his back.

He was walking gently down towards the stand, and as he proudly moved along he looked the *beau idéal* of a magnificent race-horse, and Miss Montalban gazed upon him with admiration beaming all over her beautiful face. The horse trod the turf like a deer, and was a pattern of gentleness and docility. First of all he was cantered up to the hill and back again to the stand, and then he was taken the "rattling gallop" over the cup course.

Miss Montalban watched him as he fled along, and he seemed like a load-stone to her eyes, for they were fixed upon him as he moved. His rattling gallop was a rattler indeed. He was flying like the wind over the course, down round the hill and the clump of trees in the far distance; he came round towards the stand again, and still with undiminished swiftness. He approached

the stand; before Miss Montalban could draw a long breath he was passing her at his greatest speed, but in the next instant, at the bidding of his rider, indicated by the most delicate pressure of the fingers on the reins, with a skin that looked like shining satin, he stood as quiet as a lamb.

Miss Montalban cantered over to where her favourite was standing, and entered into animated conversation with the boy on his back, who felt very proud and gratified at being talked to by such a splendid lady, albeit he had been enjoined by his employer not to hold converse with anybody during the time he was out with his horse at exercise.

As Miss Montalban rode at a walk through the park down the hill that leads from the plantation that belts the race-course in Goodwood Park, she fell a-musing upon coming events and coming

people. The Marquis of Milltown would arrive at Lord Templebloke's in the course of the morning, and Mr. Silvester Langdale had promised to join their party on the lawn; and so in musing thus, Miss Montalban came to institute comparisons —odious, as we know they are, at all times—between the Marquis of Milltown and Mr. Silvester Langdale.

And why did she institute these comparisons in her own mind at that moment? She had never done so before. She had always looked upon the Marquis of Milltown as a kind of ridiculous toy, admirably constructed and made up,—an animated automaton, a living marionnette; but since she had known Silvester Langdale the Marquis had gradually assumed a different character in her eyes. She had an instinctive knowledge or feeling that, as far as the intellect of the young Marquis was capable of embracing such a sentiment,

he looked with something more than ordinary admiration upon herself; and when the suggestion occurred to her she smiled, as though she were amused by it. But a somewhat similar suggestion had imperceptibly dawned upon her mind with regard to Silvester Langdale, and she did not smile at that; and although she pondered upon the subject, it could scarcely be said to assume the shape of definite thought in her mind. But now, as she is passing through the fragrant woods that lead to Lord Templebloke's house, she finds herself instituting a comparison between the Marquis of Milltown and Silvester Langdale.

She is passing slowly along beneath those perfumed hedges, and at the same moment Silvester Langdale is flying over the land in a Brighton express train at the rate of fifty miles an hour. And he, too, is absorbed in thought, and the

object of his thoughts is Augusta Montalban.

The party at Lord Templebloke's have been assembled at the breakfast table some time when she arrives, and when she reaches the breakfast-room there is a general exclamation of confused, good-humoured remonstrance, which takes no definite form of words. Amongst the guests assembled at the breakfast-table is the Marquis, who rises on the entrance of Miss Montalban. He has finished his breakfast, and says—

"How de do?" with the same drawl as usual. "You have been lying late in bed for such a morning."

"Bed!" she exclaimed, rather indignantly; "I was up and out upon the racecourse four hours ago."

"Four hours ago!" cried the Marquis of Milltown, in a tone which implied that it required all the resources of his mind

to comprehend the intimation. "Why, that would be—that would be—let me see, it's now nine o'clock,—why, that would be between three and four o'clock in the morning. What ever time could you have gone to bed?" and he put this question with such drawling deliberation, that it quite irritated Miss Montalban.

"I have been to see the horses at exercise," she cried, quickly, "as I have done each morning since I have been here."

"Oh, how I should have liked to have been there too!" said the Marquis of Milltown.

"Why didn't you go then?" inquired Miss Montalban, pettishly.

"I hadn't the least ideyaw that you were going, and I only arrived late last night, you know. Oh, I wish I had known!" and really the noble young Marquis, his brilliant attire notwithstanding, looked

quite lackadaisacal, and Miss Montalban laughed.

The Marquis of Milltown felt that he had a little strained his intellect in indulging in the unwonted excitement he had just gone through, and so he sauntered through the open French window on to the lawn outside, and there meeting with a kindred spirit, they each indulged in a cigar in the brilliant sunshine, and amongst the flowers that were in beauteous profusion all around. And presently they were joined by nearly all the company at Lord Templebloke's, who passed the early morning in various ways about the parterres and on the lawns, as their fancies led them. But Miss Montalban did not leave her room until it was time for the party to set out for the racecourse, and once in the course of the morning this fact struck the Marquis forcibly as he was lounging with Lord Montalban; and

making the discovery, he exclaimed, in a kind of scared tone—

"Where's Augusta?"

Lord Montalban happened to look towards one of the upper windows of the mansion, and seeing his daughter there, he said, "There she is, looking down upon us from her room."

The Marquis of Milltown's soul was mollified. From that chamber window, as he slowly paced the lawn, his magnificent figure could be seen to unusual advantage, and that very day he wore a suit the pattern of which had for the first time appeared in Paris only the Sunday before. The Marquis was indeed happy.

Miss Montalban was looking at him, but she was not thinking of him. Her thoughts were anticipating an approaching scene.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GOODWOOD MEETING.

ALONG the road that winds through the park at Goodwood in front of the mansion there is a stream of carriages of all kinds, and of pedestrians wending their way to the racecourse that is behind the wood at the top of the hill.

There is not a more brilliant outdoor scene than that which is presented on the greensward beneath the trees at the side of the grand stand at Goodwood when the annual and world-renowned race meeting is on. The rank, the fashion, the beauty of the land, are there in all their brightest gaiety. If it be not the

greatest, Goodwood is undoubtedly the most aristocratic race meeting in the country—not even excepting Ascot. Its influence is not confined to our land; for the list of brilliant fashionables that annually assemble at Goodwood House is always adorned by an accession of foreigners of high rank, not unfrequently including royalty itself. It is a meeting, too, that has always hitherto attracted some foreign equine celebrity to contest its chief event. It would seem to be a widely coveted honour to carry off a Goodwood prize, and so we find that kings and princes seek it. Under these circumstances the meeting is always one of national interest, and is looked forward to as a kind of national event.

The slopes of the velvety lawn by the side of the grand stand are occupied by the brilliant gatherings from the ducal houses, and the houses of other noble

entertainers in the neighbourhood. Lord Templebloke's party are conspicuous on that lawn, and conspicuous in that conspicuous party is the beautiful, and, as some would say, the proud and haughty, and others the passionless, daughter of Lord Montalban. Few who looked upon her noble form, as she stood gazing upon the cantering competitors for the approaching race, understood the character of Augusta Montalban; least of all, perhaps, that faultlessly attired figure with the handsome face and aristocratic bearing, that is at this moment indicating on the card and pointing out to the grand beauty which is her favourite for the approaching struggle—"Peeping Tom."

She is admired by a thousand eyes that are now turned upon her, and she is at this moment gazed upon by a pair of eyes as brilliant as her own, and adorning a face as beautiful as hers, for they might

have been modelled in the same mould. The person to whom that face belongs is leaning over the end of the balcony in the grand stand, and she has been visited once or twice by the Marquis of Milltown. Indeed, he would seem to have oscillated between this lady and Miss Montalban, although this was not known to Lord Montalban's daughter.

Yes, those brilliant eyes above the corner of the balcony are flashing upon, rather than gazing at, Miss Montalban. And how beautiful the two faces look! and how similar the beauty of each! Why, if they were placed in the stereoscope together they might almost do for one face. But the expression of the two at this moment as we gaze upon them is widely different. In the one there is pleasurable excitement; in the other there is ill-concealed passion. And strangely has that passion been conceived,

and strangely is it cherished in that beautiful breast. Yes, she gazes with passion upon her countenance upon Miss Montalban, and yet how little does she know Augusta Montalban! She will, however, perchance know more of what her real character is ere this, her history, closes.

The great race of the day is over, and Angusta Montalban was right in her prediction, for "Peeping Tom" has won.

Before the great race of the day Silvester Langdale had joined Lord Montalban's party on the lawn, and he had felt the deepest interest in the proceedings on the racecourse; not that he really cared much about them, but simply because Augusta Montalban was so absorbed in what was taking place. Truth to say, for the sports themselves he did not care very much; and as he had made his way through the shouting and ges-

ticulating mob that constitutes what is technically called the "ring"—so called, we presume, because there is little therein that is conducted "on the square,"—the scene therein was not calculated to impress him very favourably with regard to the adjuncts of the sport of racing. He shared, however, the excitement which Miss Montalban exhibited, and as the great race was being contested, the enthusiasm of the beautiful girl near to him extended itself to him.

The glittering occupants of the velvet bank that slopes from the enclosure to the right of the stand are promenading beneath the trees, and Silvester Langdale is walking by the side of Miss Montalban, charmed, delighted, and absorbed; for all thought of the sports of the day is banished from his mind,—such sports are not in harmony with his thoughts. But Augusta Montalban's heart is still

with her equine favourite, and she is anxious to have him brought on to the lawn, for the privileged occupants thereof to observe his appearance after his recent contest. The desire is conveyed to her father, and by him is conveyed to the stewards, one of whom is the Marquis of Milltown, and orders are instantly despatched to have the noble animal paraded before the admiring eyes of the assembled beauty on the spot.

The commission with which the Marquis of Milltown has been entrusted has thrown that distinguished individual into quite a flutter of excitement, and having despatched the order for "Peeping Tom" to be brought on to the lawn, he takes his way to the corner of the balcony on the stand, where the beauty who bears such a strong resemblance to Miss Montalban is seated.

"Oh, I thought you were going to

leave me to myself here," she said, pettishly. "I do not know whether you consider this acting up to your promise;" and she drew herself up haughtily as she spoke.

"Now don't look in that way—pray don't," cried the magnificent Marquis, piteously. "I have been walking up and down the middle of the lawn, just where it is the least frequented, in order that you should have a full view of me, and there all the time you would look another way; it was very cruel of you—it was indeed."

"Walking up and down for me to see you!" she cried, impetuously. "What do you suppose I wanted to look at you for?"

"There now, isn't that too bad! I waited last night to the very last minute for the parcel from Poole's, and at three o'clock he had to telegraph to Paris about

the finish of the wristbands, and it was not until nearly six o'clock that he got the reply. Look, isn't it wonderful?" and he held up his arm, so that the lady might observe some new style with regard to the working in the sleeve; "and all this I did for you, and see how you treat me!"

"You did not do it wholly for me; you did it as much for her;" and she pointed with a quivering finger at Augusta Montalban.

"Now I didn't, for I never told her anything about it; so there you are wrong now!" and the young Marquis quite brightened up under the impression that he had said something irresistibly convincing.

"Why, they are taking the horse down to the lawn!" she cried, in a gratified tone.

"Oh dear me, yes! it was that that I

came up to tell you about, but you put it all out of my head," said the Marquis, very languidly, as though he would not be able to hold out much longer under the fearful mental pressure of the last two or three minutes. "And I came up," he continued, "to ask you to go down with me to look at him."

The intimation is evidently pleasing to the lady, for her countenance brightens up as she receives it; and taking the arm of the brilliant Marquis, she descends the steps that lead to the lawn.

The gallant winner of the chief race of the day is in the array of beauty that adorns the slopes of the lawn, and he stands as quiet as a lamb to be admired and caressed. He has been rubbed down, and his coat shines brightly in the sun, as though it had been oiled all over. There is no admirer so ardent, so enthusiastic, in that gay throng as Augusta Mont-

alban; and as she leans upon the arm of Silvester Langdale, and with her father on the other side, she is eloquent in the praises of the victorious steed.

"If we had our stud now, papa, he should certainly be one," she said.

Lord Montalban shrugged his shoulders, and smiled across at Silvester Langdale, who was a little bewildered, partly by the scene around him, and partly by the excitement of Miss Montalban. She almost dragged him to the side of the horse, and as she patted with her delicate hand the arched neck of the noble animal before her, she inquired of Silvester if it was not indeed a splendid creature.

Silvester Langdale has turned his head to offer some corroborative observation, but he is arrested in that intent by a marked and sudden change that has come over the expression of Miss Montalban's countenance. Instead of the joyous look

which it displayed but a minute before, it is now clouded with passion.

On the other side of the arched neck of the racer is a face in which Silvester Langdale sees the counterpart of Augusta Montalban, and the expression upon the two countenances is now the same. Passion is agitating both, and is flashing from those brilliant eyes. Silvester Langdale, with Augusta Montalban, stands on one side of the horse, and the Marquis of Milltown, with Marie Wingrave, stands upon the other.

"What can be the matter?" Langdale anxiously whispers to Miss Montalban.

"Come away," she almost gasps,—"come away to papa;" and then turning hastily round, she encounters Lord Montalban, to whom she cries, in a tone of great excitement, "Look there, papa—look; surely we could not be humiliated or insulted more." And she directed his

attention to the Marquis of Milltown, whose companion was still gazing at Miss Montalban, and with an expression of scornful triumph on her countenance now.

"Come away!" again she cries to Silvester Langdale, as she almost convulsively clutches at his arm; and they take their way to the slope underneath the trees.

Silvester Langdale feels utterly bewildered, for this strange change in the bearing of Miss Montalban is wholly inexplicable to him. He feels hesitation in his desire to question the young lady upon the subject, and yet he would fain seek information upon it. To this end he turns to look towards the horse, still standing to be admired upon the lawn, and then he observes the Marquis of Milltown languidly and yet attentively indicating the prominent points of the

animal to the lady who is with him, and who had struck Langdale as bearing such a remarkable resemblance to Miss Montalban.

Silvester Langdale looks again, and as he does so a cloud comes over his countenance, for he fancies he has instinctively discovered the cause of Miss Montalban's excitement and embarrassment. And yet by what title could Silvester Langdale claim to have any unusual feeling in the discovery that he believed he had instinctively made, that Miss Montalban, having had a cherished feeling for the Marquis of Milltown, now felt the pangs of jealousy in the discovery that the Marquis was with another, and preferred that other to herself? Silvester Langdale believes that he has a full right and title registered in his heart to justify the feeling which animates him. And speedily that feeling generates others, and there is a confused

admixture agitating his breast. He feels a kind of satisfaction—scarcely, if at all, defined, it is true—in the discovery that the Marquis of Milltown was attracted by some one other than Miss Montalban; but then, as he turns to the beautiful face beside him, he sees it passionately agitated, and he attributes the agitation which is exhibited to the baffled hopes that she has entertained with regard to the Marquis. This imagined discovery supplies the antagonistic feeling of satisfaction with which he had gratified himself with regard to the selection of the Marquis of Milltown.

Silvester Langdale had been but a short time in the world of society; he knew nothing of the high civilization of that world's centre, London, and he had yet to learn much that was necessary to enable him to read aright the feelings which agitated himself and Miss Montalban.

"Now don't agitate yourself, Augusta," Lord Montalban says to his daughter, as she resumes her seat beneath the trees. "She will not come near you, she will scarcely venture here."

"It is so, then," thought Silvester Langdale; "this is, indeed, a favoured rival." And he was of course plunged in the depths of misery at once.

The horse has been removed, the Marquis of Milltown has conducted Marie Wingrave back to the balcony on the stand, and Miss Montalban has recovered her equanimity, and Silvester Langdale's heart is delighted, for with a pleased smile she thanks him warmly for his attention.

The magnificent Marquis of Milltown was entirely innocent of any intention of putting a slight upon Miss Montalban. He had accompanied Marie Wingrave through the crowd, and he had not

the slightest anticipation that Lord Montalban's daughter would be conducted to the same spot at the same instant; and as it was utterly impossible that the mind of the Marquis could be occupied with two objects at one and the same time, he was quite oblivious, during the inspection of the horse, of the flashing indignation that was darted from the eyes of Lord Montalban's daughter at his companion.

There could be no doubt that Augusta Montalban found much gratification in the attentions of Silvester Langdale, and that young gentleman began to flatter himself that after all he might have been mistaken in his impressions with regard to the recent *contretemps* on the lawn. While the young barrister was in conversation with Miss Montalban upon subjects wholly unconnected with the scene before them, a tall, gaunt, but very aristocratic

figure approached Lord Montalban. This was no less a dignity than his Grace the Duke of Chaumontel, whose eldest son and heir-apparent was the Most Noble the Marquis of Milltown. The noble duke attracted attention wherever he went; for, as we have said, he was very tall, was very grim and gaunt-looking, and he dressed in the fashion of fifty years ago, when that great and good man, whose memory is revered by a grateful country on account of his brilliant and conspicuous virtues in every relation of life, whether as father, as husband, as son, or as king, and who was designated by that high-minded aristocracy with whom he associated as "the first gentleman in Europe," — fifty years ago, when that brilliant ornament of the nation's greatness was the glittering representative of an idiot king. The Duke of Chaumontel was a fossil exquisite of a former

generation. He was Corinthian Tom preserved. He wore Hessian boots; a light fawn-coloured garment immediately above, fitting so tightly that it appeared to be his skin; a coat, the collar of which was so deep that it seemed to force his head forward, and the tails of which were so pointed that, in profile, he looked like a bird upon a perch; and a hat broad in the crown, arched, and turned up at the side in the brim. His neck was encased in a broad, white, stiff neckcloth, over which came up beneath his ears a white collar, so starched and thick that his head appeared to be a fixture, so that he could turn neither to the right nor the left except by moving his whole body. Such was the father of the Marquis of Milltown,—a nobleman now about sixty years of age, and who had not married until rather late in life, as it had taken him many years to decide

in his own mind whether it was consistent with his dignity to marry at all.

"Montalban," said this august being, approaching Lord Montalban like an ambulatory statue, "I want to speak to you;" and he beckoned his friend aside by a motion of his hand that made the beholder almost fancy that he heard the click of the works that were in the interior of the noble Duke, through whose agency he moved.

Lord Montalban, thus invited, strolled with the Duke of Chaumontel to a somewhat secluded spot under the trees at the back of the grand stand, and when they had arrived there, the Duke stopped mechanically, and turning to the Viscount, he inquired if that noble lord had observed the conduct of the Most Noble the Marquis of Milltown that morning.

"Why, he seemed determined that it

should not escape us," said Lord Montalban.

"Damme, Montalban, if something isn't done, that girl will be sure to marry him, you know."

The Duke of Chaumontel did not say this in an excited tone; he did not utter the words as though he had any very intense feeling in the matter, but as though it were a disagreeable subject that they had better send to the family man of law to have abated according to the form of some necessary judicial proceeding.

"But why have you such alarming apprehensions?" Lord Montalban inquired.

"Do you know her?" asked the Duke of Chaumontel.

"I have seen something of her," replied Lord Montalban, with a frown on his brow.

"Most charming creature, I admit, you know," exclaimed the Duke, with a crisp, parched smile, "and I cannot but admire the boy's taste; but what more does he want? And yet what is the use of my putting that question? It is she, not he. She has got all the arts of intrigue natural to her; he has none. Montalban, she'll marry him if something isn't done."

"What can be done?" inquired Lord Montalban.

"That's what I want you to tell me, Montalban. Confound it, what's the use of a friend if you can't depend upon him at a pinch like this?" and then the Duke of Chaumontel laughed as before, as though he had said something particularly good and smart or *àpropos*. "I tell you, Montalban," he continued, "that if I were to lock him up in Tilbury Fort, that girl would get at him, and compel him to marry her. I'm sure of it."

"Do you think she can be dealt with?" Lord Montalban suggestively inquired.

"Dealt with! What, with a dukedom in perspective, and two hundred and twenty-five thousand a year at the back of it! Not a bit of it;" and the Duke of Chaumontel laughed a kind of approving laugh at the determination and vigour of the young lady who was the subject of the conversation. "No, Montalban," he added, "there is but one way, and that is to marry him off before she does it;" and he drew himself up as though he had made a profound suggestion, and one indicating great sagacity.

"That will be a very good plan if you can carry it out," said Lord Montalban.

"I don't care a single curse whom the boy marries, so that it's somebody in our own sphere, you know. He may marry the old Dowager Bompasspottle, if he likes,—she's got blood, at any rate,—or

that young catamaran, Dunkirk's daughter, who was so saucy about the baker's son, and threatened that if anybody said anything about it, she'd say that it was the Duke, as she might, she declared, as well fix it upon him as anybody else. Wicked young puss, eh?" And the Duke of Chaumontel laughed quite heartily at the idea of a more august duke than himself being involved in such a matter. "Indeed," said the Duke, continuing his suggestion, "I think she'd do very well for him, supposing we can't find anybody at once that is a great deal better, and with equal blood." And as he said this he looked askance at Lord Montalban, who appeared for the moment thoughtful. "But, however, Montalban, you think the matter over, and I'll ask your advice upon it farther, either after dinner to-night or to-morrow morning."

Lord Montalban indicated acquiescence,

and the two noble peers took their way back to the gay party under the trees, where they found that Silvester Langdale had just been introduced to Lord Templebloke, who had very courteously invited the young barrister—of whom, he said, he had already heard so much—to stay at his house while he remained in the neighbourhood of Goodwood. Need we say that the invitation was joyously, not to say eagerly and rapturously, accepted?

Silvester Langdale said, in a whisper, to Lord Montalban, that he would go back to Chichester at once, and send his servant with his luggage to Lord Templebloke's.

"And who do you think that servant is?" said Silvester Langdale. "But of course you can't guess."

"Why, is he somebody very remarkable?" Lord Montalban inquired.

"He's Abel Barnes."

"No!" shouted Lord Montalban, with a loud laugh. "I'll go and tell that to Templebloke; he'll be delighted to hear it, I know; it will be fun to him."

In five minutes afterwards Silvester Langdale was on his road to Chichester, having directed the driver of the hackney carriage to drive as fast as he could, which he did.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FAMILY ARRANGEMENT.

THE Duke of Chaumontel was not staying at Lord Templebloke's, but was sojourning with another great magnate in the neighbourhood, at whose house there was as distinguished a party as that which was assembled in the mansion of Lord Templebloke, — more distinguished, indeed, because, besides the Duke himself, there were two or three Serene Highnesses, with round turnipy countenances and fishy eyes, and whity-brown hair, and thick intellects; and, in addition to them, a queen regnant—for royalty of various grades very frequently visits Goodwood at the time of the race meeting.

The Duke of Chaumontel was awake at least twenty minutes before his usual time on the morning after the occurrences recorded in the last chapter, and his valet was quite astounded at being summoned to his noble master's chamber so much out of the usual course. The fact was, the noble Duke was embarrassed with a feeling that very nearly approached to anxiety,—or rather, we should say that he was suffering from a conflict of feelings, and this had caused him to awake twenty minutes earlier than usual. The various feelings by which he was agitated partook alternately of the hilarious, the serious, the dubious, and the irritating. In the first place, in his mind it was quite funny to think that anything requiring consideration at all should cause him to wake in the morning twenty minutes before his usual time. Indeed, he could not believe that he had done so until he had

summoned his faithful valet, and ascertained that his Grace's watch had not mysteriously lost twenty minutes during the night. Then he became a little serious when he thought that some little energy and considerable promptitude were required in the matter respecting which he had consulted his noble kinsman on the previous day. He felt dubious upon a domestic consideration—namely, whether he should consult the Duchess on the matter. The Duchess was with him in Sussex. There could be but little doubt that she exercised a commanding influence even in the august company by which she was surrounded; for, to say nothing of her exalted social position, she was impressively stout. In this respect she was a striking contrast to his Grace her husband, who was so gaunt and thin that when they promenaded together, which was not often, they looked some-

thing like a Jack-in-the-green and a hop-pole out for a walk. If she had been born in the centre of Africa she would certainly have been claimed for royalty, and, by reason of her bulk, have been elevated to a diadem. Being the wife of the Duke of Chaumontel, it is almost needless to say that she was a daughter of one of the most exalted families in the land; and although she came to her noble husband without a sixpence of her own, yet she had such an appreciative notion of the dignity of her blood and the exaltation of her race, that the Duke her husband had once been known, in an unwonted fit of enthusiasm, to exclaim that she was worth her weight in gold, which, as the declaration was made on the word of a peer of the realm, of course was conclusive proof that her value was almost incalculable. It was with regard to consulting this substantial

and august lady that the Duke of Chaumontel felt dubious, and after turning the matter over in his mind for fully fourteen minutes, he came to the conclusion that it would be better not to trouble the Duchess upon the subject until it was finally settled and disposed of.

And, lastly, he was slightly irritated that this affair should have arisen to trouble him at all. There was one thing, however, pressingly plain to his mind, and that was that it had arisen, and that it must be disposed of. He had therefore come to the determination of riding over to Templebloke's immediately after breakfast, in order to consult Montalban upon the subject, and to settle it, and he had braced himself up to the effort of considering, during his ride across the country —it was not far, only a couple of miles— what, under the circumstances, should best be done. He had, however, in this

slightly miscalculated his own mental powers, or, at all events, the distance he had to travel, for he found himself at the door of Lord Templebloke's mansion without having troubled his mind for one instant on the subject he had in hand. Indeed, for a moment he experienced just the shade of a feeling of wonder when he found himself at the portico, as to what could have brought him there at that hour of the morning; and he was only recalled to a proper state of consciousness by the appearance of Lord Montalban at the window of the room in which the Templebloke party had breakfasted.

As the Duke of Chaumontel entered the hall he was met by Lord Montalban, who had left the room for the purpose, and the Duke at once dashed into the object of his visit, by exclaiming—

"I tell you what it is, Montalban; this business must be settled out of hand:

I haven't had a wink of sleep all night in consequence of it. Let's go and settle it at once."

Lord Montalban laughed, and led the way into a small drawing-room, where the two noble peers would be sure to be undisturbed in their momentous consultation.

"Now what do you think, Montalban?" said the Duke of Chaumontel, as soon as they had entered this room.

"Well, to tell you the truth, I haven't thought about it at all since," replied Lord Montalban, smiling.

"No, I expect not; but we must think about it now," said the Duke, hastily.

"What have you thought about it?" inquired Lord Montalban.

"Damme if I know!" exclaimed the Duke, laughing, as though he had uttered a good joke, as perhaps he had.

"It's impossible to get him out of the way," suggested Lord Montalban.

"Oh, quite, of course," replied the Duke, decisively. "Where are you to get him to?"

"He wont take office, I suppose?" Lord Montalban asked.

"Office!" cried the Duke, in a tone which implied that he did not understand the allusion.

"Can't you put him into the Government in some way?"

"Egad, not a bad idea!" exclaimed the Duke of Chaumontel, quite joyously. "What do you think we could make him?"

"Can't you make him Lord Chamberlain, or Lord something or other in the household?" Lord Montalban suggestively inquired.

"Wont do at all—wont do at all," hastily responded the Duke of Chau-

montel. "She'd be sure to get at him there, as sure as you are standing before me, Montalban."

Lord Montalban laughed hilariously, and said the Duke seemed to be thoroughly acquainted with her.

"I am, I can assure you," said the Duke, quite seriously; and then brightening up, he added, "There are two offices we might take our choice of, and I do believe they are the only two that will answer the purpose."

"And what are they?" inquired Lord Montalban, evidently much amused.

"Why, either the First Lord of the Admiralty or the Secretary for War."

Lord Montalban elevated his eyebrows, and, in a tone of astonishment, asked why, on earth, either of those offices.

"Why, you see, if he was First Lord of the Admiralty, we could stick a file of marines or blue-jackets outside the office;

or if he was Minister for War, we could have a company of Guards outside the War Office, and they might perhaps keep her out, although even that protection might be doubtful."

Lord Montalban laughed heartily, and said he was afraid that scheme was hopeless.

"Well, then, it only comes to what we said yesterday, you know," said the Duke, in a tone of slight despondency.

"What is that?" Lord Montalban required to know.

"Why, we must marry him out of hand."

"Yes, that's the most effectual way, certainly; but how's that to be done?"

"Well, you see," said the Duke, solemnly, "there's the difficulty. Of course one can get him married to some bishop's daughter, or judge's daughter, or the daughter of a baronet, or people of

that class, or to a daughter of some member of the House of Commons; there's plenty of opportunity, of course, amongst these classes; but then, you see, that's the very thing one wants to avoid. He might as well marry Marie Wingrave as one of them. As I said yesterday, if he marries by arrangement, he must marry blood; but of the two, to be candid with you, I don't know if I would not rather see him marry Marie Wingrave than the daughter of a mushroom bishop, or a barrister, or a House of Commons man, I would indeed, because Marie Wingrave would have the advantage over them,—she would have no connexions of her own, as they would have, bah!"

"Is there no one that you know who seems eligible?" Lord Montalban inquired.

The query seemed suddenly to brighten up the noble Duke with some striking

and pleasing idea, for his face became suffused with a gaunt smile as he exclaimed—

"Why, of course, Montalban, how strange that it never struck me before!"

"Struck you before? what do you mean?" inquired Lord Montalban.

"Struck me before!" echoed the tall Duke; "why, I mean what you mean;" and he laughed.

"Do you?" said Lord Montalban, rather puzzled; "and what may that be?"

"Have you ever hinted at it yourself?" the Duke inquired.

"Hinted at it to whom?" said Lord Montalban, more puzzled than before.

"Ah, now, Montalban, what is the use of beating about the bush in this way? The match, you know, would be all that could be desired on all sides;" and the Duke looked smilingly at Lord Montalban.

"Of course it would be, if you are so pleased with it; but you have not told me who the lady is;" and Lord Montalban still spoke with a puzzled look.

"Come, now, I call that a fine joke," cried the gaunt Duke, laughing. "You propose to me for her yourself, and now you ask me who she is."

"I proposed to you!" exclaimed Lord Montalban, in a tone of astonishment. "What is it that you mean?"

"Confound it, Montalban, what is it *you* mean?" cried the Duke, laughing. "What is the object of this finessing? Surely we are not two women?"

The Duke certainly did not bear the least resemblance to one.

"Now just tell me, Chaumontel, what it is you are driving at, for, upon my soul, I can't tell—I have not the least notion, I can assure you;" and the Duke might have perceived that Lord Montalban

was serious from the tone in which he spoke.

"Why, that I perfectly agree with you, that of all things it is the very match for him," replied the Duke, shrugging his shoulders.

"Well, but what match?—Marie Wingrave?" and Lord Montalban could not help laughing as he put the question.

"Marie Wingrave!" exclaimed the Duke; "now have you not just suggested that my son Milltown and your daughter Augusta would be a very proper match?"

Lord Montalban elevated his eyebrows in amused astonishment as he answered—

"When did I suggest it?"

"Why, not five minutes ago."

"Such was not my intention, then."

"Don't you think it would be a proper match?" the Duke inquired, rather loftily.

"An admirable match, if we can get the

two principal parties to agree to it," replied Lord Montalban.

"I'll make Milltown agree to it," the Duke said, in a tone of decision.

"Very likely," said Lord Montalban, drily; "but perhaps the task on my side may not be so easy."

"But as far as you are concerned the match is agreed upon?" the Duke of Chaumontel suggested, with as much indifference as though he were concluding a match to be run off upon Newmarket Heath.

"If Augusta is content, I shall be delighted," Lord Montalban replied.

"Then that's settled," exclaimed the Duke, decisively; "we may as well have the ceremony off at once, as soon as we get back to town, eh?"

"Perhaps it would be as well; the season is drawing to a close," said Lord Montalban, abstractedly.

"And I will give the *déjeúner* at my place," said the Duke, loftily.

"If you desire it, of course," answered Lord Montalban, still musing.

"As you have very truly remarked, Montalban, it is drawing to the close of the season, and so we may as well make a grand affair of it to wind up with, eh?" and the Duke laughed as though he had said something particularly facetious.

At this moment Miss Montalban passed the windows of the room, and in company with the Marquis of Milltown too.

"Odd coincidence, isn't it?" said the Duke, extending his arm towards the windows.

Lord Montalban smiled, but gave no opinion on the point.

"I'll settle the matter with Milltown to-night," said the Duke, rather joyously,

and then the two noble peers adjourned to the lawn.

The Marquis of Milltown, however, was not the only person that had to be settled with.

CHAPTER IX.

A BILLIARD PARTY AT LORD TEMPLEBLOKE'S AND A GOODWOOD STORY BY ONE OF THE PLAYERS.

When Lord Montalban parted from the Duke of Chaumontel, he went to seek his daughter to consult her upon the momentous business which had been so expeditiously disposed of by the Duke, and in which she may be considered as rather deeply interested. As he went along upon this errand Lord Montalban felt somewhat embarrassed, but it was not an annoying embarrassment which he felt, if we might judge from the expression of his countenance. He smiled as though he were enjoying some pleasant thought, and indeed he was amused by that which was

passing in his mind. Probably he was thinking of the manner in which the Duke of Chaumontel had put the matter, or of the off-hand manner in which the elegant Marquis had been disposed of by the puissant Duke to whom he stood in the relation of heir-apparent. Presently Lord Montalban's countenance assumed a more serious expression, produced, it may be, by the suggestion that suddenly occurred to his mind, that possibly his daughter might prove a rebellious obstacle to the carrying out of that family arrangement which the Duke of Chaumontel, as he is riding back to Goodwood, is felicitating himself upon having concluded. What that noble Duke's private thoughts and speculations upon the subject really are we shall probably have an opportunity of judging presently.

As Lord Montalban passed along the grand corridor of the mansion in which

he was sojourning he was in rather profound thought, although it was not of that absorbing nature which shuts out all external influences. Lord Montalban was not in the habit of indulging in deep thought of that kind upon any subject at any time, and such was not the character of his cogitations now. It is not at all surprising therefore that the sounds of animated conversation and occasional bursts of laughter should have attracted his attention as he passed along. These sounds proceeded from the billiard room at the extreme end of the corridor, and thither had Montalban proceeded, not that he expected that he should find there his daughter, of whom he was at that moment in search. The rattling of conversation and the laughter had a kind of attraction to which he seemed unconsciously to yield as he advanced towards the spot whence the sounds proceeded.

When he entered the billiard-room he found it filled with the young men of the party in the house, and amongst them were the Marquis of Milltown and Silvester Langdale. There are several who have not figured in this history, nor are they destined to make any conspicuous appearance therein. The party had assembled in the billiard-room, driven thither mostly by the depressing influence of *ennui*. Brilliant as was the party assembled at Lord Templebloke's, they were at times, and we may say with truth, regularly at certain times, oppressed with languor and dulness. At such a time as the Goodwood race meeting, and in such a place, the interval between ten and twelve in the morning is often a very dreary time. The guests are brilliant and gay, and used to the indulgence of every gratifying excitement which ingenuity can devise, or their own tastes and predilections suggest. When

in the country in the summer time, on such occasions as the Goodwood meeting, they feel themselves oppressed during the interval we have mentioned, because their usual resources altogether fail them, and there is nothing around them except the floral beauties of nature, which are in profusion everywhere. The appliances of art seem during that time to fail altogether, and the guests are wholly thrown upon themselves, like brilliant pearls upon a barren shore. Even intrigue and love at such a time, and in such a place, lose much of their influence, and are for a short interval quiescent.

Most of the party in the billiard-room were smoking. The Marquis of Milltown devoted a good deal of the energy of his mind to the selection of the best cigars, and he was deemed a most competent and critical judge of the luxurious weed. In fact, it might be truly said that as far as

his intellectual powers were concerned, they were all smoke. The tone of his mind was, indeed, influenced a good deal by the colour of his meerschaum, that is, influenced inversely, for, as the colour of the pipe deepened and became developed, so did his mind become joyous and light.

"Ah, here's Lord Montalban," cried the Marquis; "now he'll give us a good opinion upon the subject."

"What subject?" inquired Lord Montalban.

"Why, we've been discussing what's the best tipple with smoke."

"I say Burgundy," exclaimed a young man with florid countenance, protruding eyes and flabby cheeks, and who carried a cigar in his mouth twice as thick as his own thumb.

"Stavers the tobacconist tells me that there's nothing like whisky," said the Marquis of Milltown.

"Why?" inquired one of the party, puffing out a volume of smoke close to the ear of the Marquis.

"Well, I forget exactly why," replied the noble Marquis, cogitating for a moment. "It was something about dissolving the smoke, I think, but at all events he said it was the best."

"Whisky is all very well if you don't go beyond a certain line at night," said a tall, good-looking officer of the Guards, who, during the morning, had seemed especially desirous of cultivating the acquaintance of Silvester Langdale. "But if you go beyond that certain line you are apt to be worsted by impressive influences such as those from which little fatty Algernon Ramsbottom suffered at the very last Goodwood meeting."

"Fatty Ramsbottom, who's he?" inquired the Marquis of Milltown.

"Why, don't you know little Rams-

bottom of the Albany?" said the officer of the Guards, who had introduced the name of the gentleman referred to.

"Devil take me if I do," said the Marquis—"never heard of the fellah."

"Well, he's a jolly little fellow—drinks whisky with his smoke, and smokes pertinaciously, and he would just do for you," said the guardsman.

"Well, but what about his adventure at the meeting last year?" one of the party inquired.

"He tells the story himself," said the guardsman, "and it's worth telling too; shall I tell it, you fellows?"

There was a general adjuration to the guardsman to do so.

"The story should be entitled—" said the guardsman—

"How Algernon Ramsbottom Sweated the Favourite."

"Ah, devilish good," exclaimed the

Marquis of Milltown, apparently deeply excited on a sudden.

"Well, as you don't know Algernon Ramsbottom, I should tell you," commenced the guardsman, "that he is a rather short and a rather stout gentleman, of about forty-five years of age, and he has a tidy fortune of his own. He is a bachelor, and resides in the Albany, where he occasionally receives a few choice spirits, and makes convivial his evenings. He is of 'a sporting turn,' and is passionately fond of racing. In fact, racing is his chief if not his only sport. He follows it *con amore*, and he loves it truly. He loves the excitement, and he considers the race-horse the noblest animal in creation. Algernon Ramsbottom, however, does not keep race-horses, his sport consisting in attending the principal meetings, and occasionally making a bet or two in his own circle, and sometimes out of it, upon the chief

events. His transactions are generally marked by caution, and punctuality is a characteristic which Al. feels a well-founded pride in the possession of. He is well known in the sporting world, and is as respected as he is known.

"Now fancy to yourselves that it is the morning of the day before the Cup-day at Goodwood last year.

"'Well, I'm glad they'll go—and now, Bob, bring me my buckskin breeches,' exclaimed Al. Ramsbottom, as he finished his third cup of coffee and wiped his mouth with his handkerchief.

"His trusty attendant, whom hehas addressed as Bob, has just returned with an answer to an invitation which his master had sent to three friends, 'jolly dogs,' as Algernon often asseverates, with a chuckle, they are, and the answer is to the effect that the three friends in question will accompany him that day to Goodwood.

"They are to start from Piccadilly in Ramsbottom's dog-cart at eleven, for the Brighton Railway station.

"'Have you got the breeches?' inquired Algernon, as his attendant entered the room again.

"'Here they air, sir, as white as sky-blue ought to be, but which, as you know, sir, it aint in London,' observed Bob, holding up the article of Mr. Ramsbottom's dress referred to.

"Algernon Ramsbottom gazed at them for a moment in admiration, and then remarked that he thought they looked the thing, and requested Bob to pack them carefully and flat in the portmanteau.

"Bob, observing that it warn't the first time he'd had the handling o' a pair o' breeches, gathered them carefully under his arm, and opened the door to proceed to the performance of the duty of pack-

ing assigned to him. As he opened the door, he turned round and said, 'Mr. Withersby, sir,' and immediately afterwards a tall, good-looking man, with more than an ordinary share of whisker, entered the room, followed by two others.

"'Ah, Withersby—how are you, Jack? Good morning, Alec!' exclaimed Algernon Ramsbottom, shaking hands with all three. 'I'm devilish glad we can all go together.'

"'Well — it is lucky,' responded Withersby; 'is the dog-cart ready?'

"'I daresay it is,' replied Algernon. 'Bob,' cried he, calling out of the door, 'just see if the dog-cart's ready, will you?'

"Algernon Ramsbottom hastily put on his over-coat, which was lying on the sofa, and, as he pulled up the collar, the exertion of which operation rather flushed his countenance, he said, 'Just a thimbleful before we start, eh?'

"All the three friends were of opinion that it would be 'as well;' and so Algernon Ramsbottom brought out his spirit stand, and they each took a glass of real French brandy to protect themselves against 'the cold without,' by making themselves comfortably warm within.

"'Wehicle's ready, sir,' laconically observed Bob, putting his head in at the door, and immediately drawing it back again.

"'Come along,' said Algernon Ramsbottom; 'a drop more, Withersby?'

"'No more,' replied Mr. Withersby.

"'Alec — Jack?' appealed Algernon Ramsbottom.

"Alec tried another, and then Jack did, because he did, and then Withersby did, because Jack did, and of course Algernon Ramsbottom did, in order to be sociable with the three.

"The jovial party—for a jovial party they were—were soon in the dog-cart, and on their road to the Brighton Railway.

"I will not describe their journey down the rail, for the simple reason that such journeys, now-a-days, are devoid of incident. Incidents would appear to remain at the termini of railways, and are seldom to be found on the line.

"The party arrived at Chichester about five o'clock, and having ordered their dinner they strolled down the street, which already wore an animated appearance, as is usually the case on the eve of the Goodwood meeting.

"In due time the four returned to their inn; but although they had only ordered a rump-steak dinner (as they one and all emphatically declared on getting out of the railway carriage that they were devilish hungry), yet they had to wait a

considerable time before their repast was served. At length, however, it did appear, and from its quality they were considerably repaid for their patience. The viands of Chichester are without doubt not to be exceeded in quality by any town in the country.

"The meal was dispatched—and after the cloth was removed the little party were joined by several friends whom they had met on their arrival. By a singular coincidence of taste, whisky toddy was the order of the evening. The conversation was animated and exciting; in the course of which it came out that Algernon Ramsbottom had some very heavy bets on the favourite in the race of the morrow. What with the excitement of the conversation and the whisky punch Algernon very soon became very drowsy, and about eleven o'clock announced his intention of going to bed.

"'But mind, Withersby,' he said solemnly, although not very clearly or steadily, 'mind, Withersby, I'm up early in the morning for the course.' And Algernon Ramsbottom retired to bed, his friends entertaining the belief that he would not find much difficulty in going to sleep when he reached his pillow.

"It was scarcely daylight when Algernon Ramsbottom rose in the morning, for he could not sleep. His engagements were heavier than usual on the forthcoming race, and were rather serious. He went into the coffee-room, and bringing a chair close to the window he sat down before it and looked into the street, which was of course quite deserted at that time of the morning, and which, truth to say, did not present many points of attraction at that moment.

"'A-hem—beg your pardon, sir,' said a voice near the door, and Algernon

Ramsbottom immediately turned round, when he discovered an individual muffled up about the chin, and attired in a suit which plainly distinguished him as a denizen of the stable. He had a peculiar expression of countenance, which was not at all improved by his nose, which had clearly suffered on some former occasion, and was flattened considerably. He had a thick, husky voice, well calculated no doubt to give effect to flowery language.

"'Well, what is it?' inquired Algernon Ramsbottom.

"'Please, sir, master says as how he can't start Bullfrog athout you rides him a sweat,' said the man, pulling his forelock.

"'What!' shouted Algernon Ramsbottom.

"'Fact!' laconically and pointedly observed the individual near the door.

"Mr. Algernon Ramsbottom got off his chair, walked up to the man, and looking full into his face, inquired—

"'What did you say, my man?'

"'Why, master says as how he shan't start Bullfrog athout you rides him a sweat this morning,' replied the man, doggedly.

"'What the devil does he want me to ride him for?' inquired Mr. Algernon Ramsbottom, rather tremulously.

"'Cos he says you be just the weight, and you knows how to ride.'

"Algernon Ramsbottom felt slightly flattered. He thought he *could* ride a bit; but he inquired—

"'Does your master know my weight?'

"'Ten stun two,' quickly answered the man.

"'To a pound,' said Algernon Ramsbottom.

"'Will you do it?' inquiredthe man, with a scowl.

"'I can't,' almost gasped Algernon Ramsbottom.

"'You must,' responded Algernon's visitant, 'or else smash my buttons if he'll start, and then what becomes o'your bets? Come along, you'll do it spinnin', and then he's sure to win.'

"Algernon Ramsbottom was persuaded. He followed the man who had been sent to him out of the room into the yard of the hotel, and there he met several gentlemen, most of whom he knew.

"'What's the meaning of this?' inquired Algernon Ramsbottom.

"'Come along, you must do it—you're the only man in the town that can at the weight. He must have weight upon him this morning or else he can't win. Come along,' exclaimed a gentleman with immense whiskers, and who was attired in a rough, shaggy great coat which reached nearly down to his knees. 'Come along,'

and he put his arm into the arm of Algernon Ramsbottom, and completely dragged him along, followed by the whole of those in the yard. Algernon felt that he had no power to resist, but go on he must. His companion held him with a giant's hug. They took their way to the park, and there was the celebrated horse all saddled and ready. It was rather a murky morning, and a thin fog filled the valleys that were formed by the lands that stretch out from that noble domain yonder.

'Now, then, up with you,' said the individual who had led Algernon Ramsbottom up to the park.

"Ramsbottom instinctively took hold of the pommel of the saddle, and put up his booted foot for a 'leg up.' The necessary assistance was given, and Algernon was astride the winner of the St. Leger—the celebrated Bullfrog. His

heart beat within him, that is, Algernon's did, but as he settled down in his seat on the magnificent victor of the north he felt his confidence growing within him, and a flush of gratification thrilled through his heart. He cantered gently down the course, through the flat at the bottom, and reached the hill beyond. Only a few had accompanied him down there. He turned the horse round, and the signal was given. Away he went as hard as he could pelt, the horse's nostrils dilated with the energy he was displaying, and he came like a mad thing up the course. When opposite the stand, Algernon Ramsbottom's heart began to fail him. He had been directed to pull up just beyond the stand, and there his friends awaited him. At the commencement of the stand he began to pull, but he found that the more he pulled the faster the horse galloped. At every tug

of the rein the animal gave a sort of grunt of defiance. The friends of the horse and the rider looked on in dismay. One cried out, 'Algernon, Algernon, think of the bets you've got on him, and pull him.'

"'Think of the body I've got on him, and I can't pull him,' shouted Ramsbottom.

"'He'll be over the rails yonder into the ditch, as sure as there's little apples,' remarked a gentleman attired in corduroys, and who carried his hands in his pockets.

"And sure enough Algernon Ramsbottom on the back of the favourite fled on along the course towards the hill, followed by all those who had accompanied him from his hotel. There was a loud yell of horror from the crowd that thus pressed after Ramsbottom. As he fled towards the hill, the country people who

had assembled there shouted and held up their hands in astonishment. Still towards the hill he dashed—he saw a crowd assembled before him on the hill—he was in amongst them in an instant—a sturdy hand was upon his shoulder—he felt a violent shake, and a voice exclaimed—

"'Come, Ramsbottom, are you going to sleep and groan there all day? It's ten o'clock.'

"And Algernon Ramsbottom sat up in bed, and recognised his three friends who had come down with him standing near.

"'Oh, Lord! Withersby, I've had such a dream,' said Algernon, as he took his nightcap off; 'but it's always the case when I take rump-steaks late in the evening.'

"'And whisky punch after,' suggested Mr. Withersby, winking to the other

two friends. 'Come, tumble up, old chap, or else we shall be too late.'

"So Algernon Ramsbottom 'tumbled up' accordingly; and after a substantial breakfast the party proceeded to the park, and passed a pleasant day."

Lord Montalban had remained to listen to the story, which certainly for the time dispelled the *ennui* under which "the fellahs," as the Marquis of Milltown had designated them, had been suffering. Having given his tribute of thanks to the narrator of the story, Lord Montalban proceeded across the room to Silvester Langdale, for the purpose of asking the young barrister if he had that morning seen Miss Montalban, and if so, if he knew where she was to be found. Before Lord Montalban could carry out this intent, however, his daughter dashed into the room, accompanied by another lady about her own age. She laughed

joyously as she did so, although it must be confessed that as soon as her eyes fell upon her father and Silvester Langdale she felt slightly embarrassed. Only, however, for an instant; for running across to Lord Montalban, she cried—

"Oh, papa, Lady Arabella has challenged me to a game of pyramids; so I am very glad that you are here, although I thought no one was here."

"Ah now, Augusta, you saw me come in," said the Marquis of Milltown, with a smirk.

Miss Montalban did not condescend to notice this intimation. Perhaps she was prevented doing so by one or two of the gentlemen apologizing for the tobacco-smoke that was so prevalent in the room.

"Don't say a word about it," said Miss Montalban; "I like it, and so does Arabella. Don't you, dear?"

Lady Arabella said she liked the aroma

of a cigar very much. She was rather attached to one of the smokers then present, but she did not say that.

The table was very speedily prepared for the impromptu match between Miss Montalban and her fair friend, and they commenced their play.

The Marquis of Milltown bent the whole energies of his mind upon a close contemplation of the game, so close indeed that his face every now and then was brought almost on a level with the cushion of the table.

Was it a little bit of malice, born of a sudden impulse, that induced Miss Montalban at one of these junctures to give the ball she was striking extra and particularly special force? Be that as it may, the ball, from the peculiar impetus, or "side" as it is technically called, which was given to it, bounded off from the ball that was struck, ricochetted over the

cushion at the exact point where the Marquis of Milltown had placed his face, and striking him full in the eye, caused that noble exquisite to utter a yell of pain and vexation.

Of course Miss Montalban was overwhelmed with anxiety and sorrow both expressed and understood, and for a short time it suspended the game upon which she was engaged. The Marquis, however, was promptly removed with his hand to his eye by a couple of his friends, who, in another chamber, ministered to the damaged optic in a manner which it seemed their practical experience suggested.

On the two remaining days of the race meeting, the people in the enclosure and on the stand wondered what was the reason that induced the Marquis of Milltown to wear a green shade over his dexter eye.

CHAPTER X.

THE DUKE OF CHAUMONTEL HOLDS ANOTHER CONSULTATION.

THE Duke of Chaumontel rode back from the mansion of Lord Templebloke in a very different frame of mind from that with which he had set out in the morning, or rather from that in which we observed him during his ride out. The noble duke had some mental characteristics which were reflected in his exquisite son and heir. His mind was so truly patrician in all its elements, that it was difficult of concentration upon any particular matter or thing for any lengthened period—half-an-hour say. In this

particular the exquisite Marquis went beyond his noble father somewhat. He was unable to concentrate his mind upon anything save his *cheval* glass, and that could scarcely be called concentration, because in such contemplation he usually became utterly lost mentally, and almost inanimate. The Duke, his father, studied outward appearances too, but in a different spirit so to speak. The father desired to present a living embodiment of the past; the son's ambition was to be the very glass of fashion of this afternoon in the park, and at the assembly of the night. The ambition of each was worthy of a patrician descent, and a territorial power that merged upon the kingly. It was an ambition that was pure and unmixed in itself, and depended upon itself alone. It was in no way associated with any baser aspirations, such as senatorial honour, or a nation's good and welfare.

The world around them was made for the Duke of Chaumontel and the Marquis of Milltown, and was subservient to them. The natural debt was all on one side; the Duke and his son came down from an unseen eminence, to question which was, in the world in which they moved, a heresy that would be less tolerated than that which would deny divinity to an archbishop.

And yet the Duke of Chaumontel was not a conqueror descended peer. Indeed in the patrician acceptation of the term, he could scarcely be said to have had ancestors at all. There is real antiquity in families in this our Norman-parcelled realm of England. It is whispered that we have amongst us the lineal descendants of the immolated thieves of Calvary, and that they are estimable citizens and large-souled patriots. There is authority for declaring that the line of Constantine has come down to our day, and that the last

link of it can commonly be seen glittering upon a grand staud and clasping a betting book. The descendants of the conquering barons who supported the Norman William, whose nobility of soul was only equalled by their impecuniosity, are scattered as we know through all our counties, and may now be said to be indigenous to our soil, and not unlike it in many respects; but the Duke of Chaumontel owned none of these classes of centuries ago as his great progenitors. His origin was not lost in the obscurity of antiquity, for it was clearly defined and accurately known. It is exactly two centuries since his first ancestor either dropped from the clouds or issued from the earth, for before that time no blood or kindred that we can trace of his existed in the world—that is, existed according to that law which patrician purity holds sacred now.

The Duke of Chaumontel, therefore, was all that could be desired of a high nobility descended anciently. He was of the world and yet above it; he was one of the lords of human kind who had the power of gratifying nearly every wish.

But these are not the thoughts and reflections that are passing through his mind, as he rides back to his noble friend's house, where the gay glittering party is assembled. He is thinking that he has done a brilliant morning's work, and he grimly smiles to himself as he jogs along. It was a wonderful effort of social diplomacy, so he mused, to seize Montalban instantly upon the suggestion about Augusta. Why, if the thing had been prepared by the Heralds' College, assisted by Garter-King-at-Arms, the Gold Stick, and Madame Rachel, a more perfect union of patrician purity could not have been selected. The ardent father's noble heart

swelled within his flannel vest as this suggestion occurred to his mind, for he felt that he had not that morning risen twenty minutes earlier than usual in vain. There are moments when a cloud-descended Duke can rouse himself to energy of action, and this was one of them.

With unexampled tenacity the Duke of Chaumontel had concentrated his mind upon the subject of his son's contract of marriage, for such he considered it from the very moment when he left the portico of Lord Templebloke's house until he had arrived within sight of the mansion in which he himself was sojourning. Indeed he had been quite absorbed in the subject, and his thoughts had been bent almost exclusively upon one point. As soon, however, as he caught sight of his noble friend's mansion, a new idea, or rather suggestion, seemed to strike his mind, and so suddenly and rather harshly, too, that

it gave him quite a mental shock. There were in reality two leading ideas coming into his mind at the same time, and hence there was a striking and effectual collision in his mental system. The moment he caught sight of the mansion to which he was returning it struck him that the Duchess was there. He had not thought of this fact previously, and now that it occurred to him he, recovering gradually from the shock which he had experienced, smiled grimly. It was a pleased smile, if not a pleasing one, and would probably be characterized by different persons after widely different forms of expression. In all probability that unfortunate individual in light buckskins and top boots, and pale-coloured coat, with a belt round the waist, who is riding behind his Grace of Chaumontel, if he had been asked a question upon the point would have said that "the Dook was a gem'man, which there wos

nothin' out o' the common in that, wos there?" And no doubt the Duke's appendage would have been right, both in his description and his interrogation. At all events the Duke's features were not in repose nor were they agitated, they were simply slightly out of their regular curves, and the Duke was thinking of the Duchess. He had been racked with doubt the previous day as to whether he should communicate his fears to her Grace on the subject of Marie Wingrave. He had no such anxiety now about communicating to her the highly satisfactory arrangement he had concluded with regard to Augusta Montalban, for he felt that such a communication would be received by the Duchess with that fervour and enthusiasm which it was well known she could on all necessary occasions display in behalf of her patrician order and those who were immediately connected with her.

The noble Duke therefore rode up, with what perhaps may be designated a light heart, to the front of the mansion at which he was visiting. The brilliant party therein had not as yet distributed themselves about the beautiful grounds, their usual custom in the forenoon, for they also, like the guests at Lord Templebloke's, were suffering—at least many of them—from the ravages of *ennui*. The chief excitement of the race-meeting had passed away with the renowned contest for the cup, and the last day of the meeting was now before them.

The Duke of Chaumontel found his lady the Duchess in her own chamber, and he entered quite radiantly to her.

"Ha, ha!" cried he, in grim jocularity, "I have been out early this morning."

"Yes, I heard that you had gone out on horseback at an unusually early hour—been up to the course, I suppose?"

"Nothing of the sort," replied the Duke, seating himself. "I have been quite in another direction."

The Duchess elevated her eyebrows as though she would say "Indeed!" but she uttered no word.

"I have been transacting some most important family business. You know I never on any pretext whatever neglect that."

"Family business down here!" said the Duchess in a tone of surprise. "What possible family business can be transacted down here?"

"A great deal," replied the Duke, "and business, too, which, if it had been delayed, might not have been transacted at all."

"Family business, you say?" the Duchess inquired, calmly.

"Family business of the highest importance."

"What?"

"I have been over to Templebloke's."

The moment the noble Duke uttered the name he was rather startled by observing that it produced a shade of displeasure upon the countenance of the Duchess. He was startled, not so much by the expression itself, as a slight disappointment which he felt. He had expected that the intimation would be received by the Duchess with an expression of pleasurable surprise and intense interest.

"And what family matters could have taken you over there, pray?" the Duchess inquired, almost frowningly.

"You know that our son is staying there," the Duke said, elevating his eyebrows.

"I do know it," said the Duchess, "and I feel annoyed at it."

"Annoyed!" the Duke exclaimed.

"Annoyed!" was the echo.

"Goodness gracious me! you have said nothing about this before."

"No, because I have not thought much about it myself until this morning."

"What an odd coincidence," said the Duke, brightening up under the suggestion.

"I see none," said the Duchess, surveying her bust in a large pier glass that was before her.

"What! not in my going over?"

"You have not told me why you went over."

"Nor have you told me that you have felt annoyance that our son should be staying there."

"Because his proper place was in this house," the Duchess replied, rather sharply.

"Oh, indeed. Why?" inquired the Duke.

"I have my special reason for thinking so."

Here was another coincidence if the noble Duke could but have seen it, but he could not, because the power of reading the thoughts of the Duchess was not one of the faculties conspicuous in his mind. The Duchess had latterly conceived certain plans with regard to her son, the exquisite Marquis, and they had a matrimonial object too. Therein of course lay the coincidence to which we have adverted, and which neither the Duke nor the Duchess could then see, because neither at the moment was acquainted with the other's thoughts, or hopes, or plans, or aspirations, whatever they were, upon the subject.

The tone of mind in which the Duke of Chaumontel found the noble Duchess was due to an arrival which had taken place the previous day in the mansion in

which they were sojourning. This arrival was no less than that of a Queen-regnant, who was accompanied by her daughter, a girl of little more than seventeen. Upon the first view it might doubtless be considered strange that such a circumstance as this should have thrown such emotion into the Duchess as that which we have just recorded, for it was emotion, and very strong emotion, considering the social position of the lady. But whatever the position, be it near to the poles of the social fabric, or in any intermediate point, there are certain feelings which are the same in all classes, although they may be and are more ardent in some classes than in others. It was after dinner, on the previous evening, that the Duchess had been struck with an idea which may be said to have fired her soul. High up in the social scale as she was placed, yet was

she ambitious for greater social distinction still, and the thought had struck her, that if her son, the brilliant Marquis of Milltown, had been present, he might have carried off a Princess for his bride. This thought she intended to keep confined to her own bosom, and hence the annoyance she had expressed at his having been so wayward as to accept the invitation of a neighbouring patrician in preference to the one which he had also received with that of his lady mother. If the Duke of Chaumontel had had any suspicion even of this state of the mind of the Duchess he would have felt quite scared, because it would have been utterly impossible for him to have advanced anything like argument against any suggestion the Duchess might make founded upon the hope she had conceived, seeing that such a hope would have instantly seized hold of his

own mind. He had, however, of course no suspicion even of what were the special reasons to which the Duchess had referred, for being annoyed that her son was not one of the guests beneath that roof under which at that particular juncture they found themselves.

"When you know what I have done, I do not think you will care much about the boy's not being one of our party," the Duke observed.

Rash Duke! he little thought how baseless was the confidence which he expressed.

"And what is the family business that you have been about?" the Duchess inquired, in a tone which implied, or that might have led to the inference, that she was not absorbed in interest upon the subject.

"I have been over to see Montalban," the Duke said.

"Is that all? I thought all his disposable property was already gone," said the Duchess, in a tone of voice that was slightly tinged with sarcasm.

"Not quite all," replied the Duke, and as he did so, there was such a peculiar expression of his eyes, that an observer might have fancied the noble Duke was suffering from internal pains, or enjoying especial satisfaction. The latter would have been the correct conclusion, because the expression of the Duke's eyes to which we have referred, was produced by the belief that he had uttered something that was sagaciously witty.

"Why, what has he got left besides the place that is so tied up?" the Duchess inquired.

"He's got something else besides an estate that is disposable," the Duke said, mysteriously.

"Indeed! What's that?"

"Can't you guess?"

"If I could, I shouldn't have asked."

"It's his daughter," cried the Duke almost with a gasp.

"What! for sale?" exclaimed the Duchess, scarcely knowing whether she ought to laugh or look serious, and coming to a compromise with herself upon the subject by first laughing, and then looking serious.

"For sale! well, 'pon my soul that's a good joke—good joke as ever I heard, 'pon my soul."

If, however, his actual feelings were to be judged by the expression of his countenance, the noble Duke had a very peculiar mode of showing his appreciation of a good joke.

"Well, what about Augusta Montalban?" the Duchess inquired. "Was the family business that you speak of connected with her?"

"It was partly, perhaps mainly," the Duke answered.

"And the nature of the business?" the Duchess demanded.

"I have arranged that our families should be more closely united, and that Augusta Montalban shall become Marchioness of Milltown."

"What!" cried the Duchess, in such a tone of excitement that it scared the noble Duke her husband.

"Surely, you have no objection," said the Duke, with quite a frightened look.

"Objection!" she cried, in an accent of derision. "Oh! it was well of you to go out early in the morning. It was worthy of such an object that you should attempt to carry it out secretly. What! she has intrigued successfully thus early, has she? She has succeeded in her threatened triumph over me, has she? But she shall find that she is mistaken—the young minx."

The Duke was utterly unable to account for this ebullition, and it nearly terrified him. He had been under the impression that the two families were on the best of terms, and so indeed they were, but the baffled hopes, as she considered them, of the Duchess, had made her rather extravagant in her rage.

"Let me ask you again," appealed the Duke, with great humility, "what is your objection, and what do you mean by threatened triumph?"

This was a double question, which the Duchess found it difficult to answer, and so she evaded it by putting another; "What has been your motive, let me ask, for bringing about such an alliance?"

The noble Duke had altogether forgotten his motive; but now that he was reminded of it, he brightened up.

"You know how impulsive he is," he said.

"Impulsive! What has that to do with the matter?" the Duchess inquired.

"My dear, did you see nothing yesterday?"

"You mean the scene on the lawn, I presume?"

"Exactly;" and the Duke smiled at the recollection.

"I heard of it, but I did not see it," the Duchess observed.

"And don't you see anything in that, my dear?"

"I understand that Augusta Montalban made herself very ridiculous on the occasion."

"Excited a little that was; and was it not natural?"

"Oh, nonsense, merely to get up a scene in public."

"My dear, Montalban agrees with me, that if something is not done that person

—of course you know to whom I refer—will certainly carry him off."

"Very kind and disinterested of Lord Montalban, I am sure," said the Duchess, in a sneering tone.

"He is of our family, you know, my dear."

"Is that any reason why he should become still more closely connected with us?"

"I think it is a very strong reason. He is of our blood," and the Duke drew himself up to his full height. "He naturally desires that our blood should be continued in all its purity. If we do not keep that steadily in view, what will become of us?"

And the Duke tried to look as though he had uttered a great philosophical truth.

"Stuff and nonsense!" exclaimed the Duchess. "I suppose you were young yourself once?"

The Duke mused for a moment, as though this were a point that had never struck him before; and then smiled, probably pleased at the recollections which the suggestion of his Duchess had called up.

"My dear," he said, benignly, "of course we were all of us younger once than we are now;" and he looked across at the Duchess as though he expected she would attempt to controvert the proposition.

She did not do so, however, but said—

"Very well, then, surely we ought to make allowances for youth in others."

"Have I not always done so in the cause of Constantine?"

"You have not done so in this instance, at all events."

"My dear, I have made every allowance in this case: and indeed it was that that prompted me to suggest the proposal to Montalban."

"Really I am at a loss to see the force of your reasoning," said the Duchess, as well she might be.

"My dear, if he forms a suitable alliance are we not then secure against accidents?"

"Surely you must take Constantine for a fool," said the Duchess, irritably.

The Duke put up his hands as though he were quite horrified at the suggestion—at the possibility of there being a fool in the family.

"No, my dear, no," he said, frankly; "he may be occasionally weak and impulsive, as I have said, but he has the blood of the Chaumontels, and I do believe he is most thoroughly a Chaumontel at heart."

"And being such, he shall never marry Augusta Montalban."

"My dear!" exclaimed the Duke in quite an awful tone of authority.

"If you had gone over to Lord Temple-

lobke's to persuade Constantine to join our circle here, I should have applauded the proceeding."

"Indeed, my dear, why?"

"I have special reasons," replied the Duchess, mysteriously.

"Reasons—special reasons—what?"

"No matter what they are, my dear; and I say again, Constantine shall not marry Augusta Montalban."

"My dear, I have passed my word to Lord Montalban."

"And I have passed mine, but not to Lord Montalban;" and the Duchess looked very determined, and spoke with much emphasis.

The Duke of Chaumontel was slightly bewildered, for no one knew better than he did that to oppose the Duchess in such matter was hopeless.

"What am I to do in such terrible circumstances?" appealed the Duke.

"Nothing," responded the Duchess.

"Nothing!" echoed the Duke.

"Nothing; leave the matter to me."

The Duke immediately brightened up, and he exclaimed, almost joyously—

"My dear, it is the very thing I would desire. Shall we join our friends on the lawn?"

The Duchess intimated that she would follow him presently. So the Duke kissed his hand to the Duchess, and quitted the apartment with a lightened heart; and by the time he had reached the lawn all his anxiety, and indeed all recollection of its cause, had passed from his mind.

CHAPTER XI.

LORD MONTALBAN CONSULTS HIS DAUGHTER.

THE thoughts of Lord Montalban, upon the subject of his recent discussion with the Duke of Chaumontel, were far more serious than those of the noble Duke. The patrician head of the Chaumontels, as we have seen, proceeded on his way quite light-hearted, and almost joyous. He felt a kind of self-congratulation because he was under the impression, or delusion, or whatever the feeling was, that he had accomplished quite a master-stroke of diplomacy, which meaner minds would never have dreamt of, far less have carried to a successful issue. Of course no thought

ever for an instant struck his mind as to the feelings of those who may, for the moment, be considered as the subordinate agent in the patrician scheme, which he had originated, and, as he now believed, he had carried out. We are speaking, of course, of the time during which he was riding leisurely back to the mansion of his lordly entertainer. His interview with the Duchess will probably have the effect of changing the current of his thoughts when his thoughts shall be again directed into the same channel. As we have seen, as soon as the noble Duke reached the lawn, on which many of the guests in the mansion in which he was staying were assembled, all thoughts of his recent diplomacy had, for a time, departed from his noble mind.

Lord Montalban had the ordeal of an interview to pass through, as well as the Duke of Chaumontel, but his thoughts

were more serious, and, perhaps we may say, more elevated than those of the noble Duke upon the same subject. The feelings which existed between those noble parents and their children were of a widely different character. The Duke of Chaumontel looked upon his son simply as the heir to the Dukedom. He considered him as a part of his coronet—the "round and top" thereof perhaps, but nothing more. He was a part of his great territorial estate, "the remainder man," as the law would designate him. The noble Duke had never exhibited any of those lower feelings which take the form of yearning after those who, as the homely suggestion of the heart would phrase it, are near and dear to us. The Duke of Chaumontel may be said to have had nothing that was near and dear to him, save his great dignity. The Marquis of Milltown had, as the eldest son of the

House of Chaumontel, been duly disposed of, according to patrician prescription, even from his birth. By the noble Duke, his father, he was never seen but once after his birth, until he appeared in blue velvet attire and could walk. A few years later, when he was the fresh-coloured, handsome boy, the noble Duke did sometimes take him down to the House of Lords, and from the place appropriated to peers' sons, just in front of the throne, would point out to him various personages, and points of the House. But the noble Duke did this less with a view of ministering to the gratification of his son and heir, than as a duty which he felt within himself, that he should go through the ordeal of indication to which we have referred, in order that his son and heir might be duly acquainted and impressed with the great dignity to which he had been born, and the destiny

for which he was intended. He had, even with considerable fortitude, gone through the boyish questioning of his young son, bearing, as it did, somewhat upon that dignity and that destiny. Quite stoically he had received the question, "Where shall I sit, papa, when I am member of this House?" We say, he received this question quite stoically, because, although it came from the innocent lips of a young child, it was unpleasantly suggestive; seeing that the event to which the boy referred could only take place, that is, in the ordinary course of things, after the demise of the noble Duke himself. The Duke, however, as we have said, was equal to the occasion, and he evaded a direct answer to the inquiry of his youthful son, by saying, "Oh, before you come here, you will have to go through the Lower House," and he spoke just as though it were a matter that

he had simply to arrange with his agent, as probably it was. Of course, the boy wished to know what the Lower House was, and to see it; but although he was told that the Lower House meant the House of Commons, he was not on that occasion taken to see it. No! the Duke of Chaumontel had done his paternal duty to his son and heir in introducing him into the House of Lords, and explaining to him its constitution. True, he had the privilege of *entrée* into the peers' seats in the House of Commons, but since he had come to the Dukedom, he had never so far forgot his dignity as to take advantage of this privilege, and appear in the House of the People. It, however, struck him—for the noble Duke's mind could occasionally receive sagacious impressions — that it was only natural that the boy should desire to see the House, of which, in the future, he was to become a member, and

the idea at once suggested itself to his mind that it might be as well to get some man who was a Member of the Lower House to do the needful; and most fortunately, and most appropriately, Sir Timothy Wurzell, who was a friend of the family, was selected, and that astute senator and man of weight had declared that by the Lord it was a privilege he should be enamoured of. He'd take the boy, of course, and would initiate him into some of those secrets of Parliament which the obese Baronet had himself so well studied, and the practical knowledge of which had carried him to such eminence as a legislator. It was, therefore, quite an exciting event to Sir Timothy Wurzell when he introduced the young Marquis of Milltown into the House of Commons as a noble spectator.

It was a busy night with the honourable baronet, because, as he desired to

practically illustrate the working of our parliamentary system as carried out by Sir Timothy Wurzell and other kindred members, he had to be running in and out continually. For some time he sat by the young Marquis, and explained to him the forms and procedure. Then he had to rush off into the body of the House to show him how to cry "Divide, divide," in such a manner as to put down the member then speaking, and altogether he got up quite a parliamentary entertainment for the young Marquis.

The relations which had always subsisted between Lord Montalban and his daughter were of a very different character from those which threw such a halo of exalted amiability round the Chaumontel family. To Lord Montalban his daughter had from her birth been a kind of idol—a real idol in fact. When she was a child he had watched and worshipped her,

and when she was at school he had lived near her. He had never thwarted her in any desire that she thought proper to entertain; and towards her his heart was turned with very humanizing and elevating influence.

It had been remarked in the circle in which Lord Montalban moved that after the death of the Viscountess he had become a changed man considerably. And so he had: not that it must be inferred that the loss of his wife had in itself brought about such a change. It is true, that he had been deeply attached to his wife, and he had mourned her death, not, as we should say, with heart-enduring grief, but decorously and with feeling.

And indeed this was saying much for Lord Montalban, because he had been a libertine in his youth, and the course of his youth had not much been changed even by his entrance into the married

state. It had been subdued perhaps, but in no other respect had it changed.

And yet Lord Montalban and his wife were much attached to each other; indeed, in the circle in which they moved they were held to be attached to each other with an ardent passion. And so they were; but they at the same time recognised certain conventionalities which may be said to be characteristic of certain high circles. Lord Montalban, therefore, felt the loss of his wife acutely—the more acutely perhaps, that she was cut off suddenly in all the pride of her beauty, and at a time when apparently a life of happiness was opening out before her.

But although Lord Montalban felt the loss of his wife acutely, the weight of his woe as ordinarily would not have been very continuous, and he might or might not have relapsed into his previous course of life, but his dead wife had left a legacy

to him, round which all the better feelings of his nature revolved, and thus became strengthened. His little daughter drew him away from scenes that were to him attractive in themselves, but which were not calculated to elevate him as a man or improve him as a citizen. As his daughter grew into womanhood her influence over Lord Montalban gradually changed in its character. He became imperceptibly her willing slave, and she exercised uncontrolled, unlimited rule over his mind, and almost over his actions. It so happened that in the main the disposition of each and the tastes of both ran in the same direction; and, as we have previously indicated, a passion for the sports of the field animated both very ardently. Gradually had Lord Montalban lost, not exactly the influence of a parent, but he had imperceptibly by degrees ceased to stand in that position as it were. Although

Augusta Montalban was as yet barely nineteen years of age, yet in sagacity, and indeed we may add, in experience, she was a woman. She had been comparatively long at the head of her father's household, and hence she had acquired habits which apparently conferred that seniority upon her which her years could scarcely give. Lord Montalban had, therefore, come gradually to regard her as his guide, and to defer to her in everything.

It may be that that feeling was not conspicuous in his mind when he was in consultation with the Duke of Chaumontel upon the important family arrangement, that we have already recorded; and this, perhaps, may be traced to the fact that the contingency of his daughter's marriage had never yet presented itself to his mind. It may, probably, be thought that when it was suggested to him by the Duke of

Chaumontel some kind of feeling of more than ordinary fervour would have been produced within his breast. Be that as it may, none at the moment was exhibited, but as soon as the Duke of Chaumontel had taken his departure, some such feeling did seize possession of his breast; but it was associated with others which agitated him. The first suggestion to his mind bore the tinge of selfishness about it, a selfishness, however, that has actuated the noblest of the human race when they have stood in the position of loving, self-devoting parents. Lord Montalban thought of his daughter's marriage as an event which would separate her from him, and for the first time in his life he felt a sensation that was something akin to anguish. His mind then gradually glided into a consideration of the proposed alliance; and while he could not but feel that every worldly consideration pointed

to it as most desirable, yet did he think of the Marquis of Milltown as he was, apart from the splendour of his position and the elevation of his birth. It was a noble alliance undoubtedly; but Augusta was not to be bartered; the suggestion for an instant suffused the face of Lord Montalban with a colour which never from the same cause, or indeed perhaps from any other cause, could have been produced upon the cheeks of the Duke of Chaumontel. The feeling, however, which had produced it was quite evanescent, for it vanished in a smile which mantled over the countenance of Lord Montalban—a smile which perhaps was one of conscious pride at the suggestion that his daughter could be bartered in any way or under any circumstances. But this suggestion, which was a pride in itself, led him into others which caused him anxiety no doubt. He had promised the Duke of

Chaumontel that he would consult Augusta upon it; and although he had made no promise, and given no pledge on her behalf, yet he knew that the Duke of Chaumontel had gone away under the impression that the matter was settled.

And here he smiled again to himself, but it was a different character of smile at this time—a kind of smile of pity, if one may so say—that the Duke of Chaumontel should go away with so much confidence in his mind on the subject in hand, without being first assured of the acquiescence of one who may be said to be very greatly interested in the proposed family arrangement. Of course his thoughts had reference to his daughter. But he had promised the Duke that he would consult Augusta on the subject; and although their thoughts were tending to the same end just at that particular moment, yet the effect of them

upon Lord Montalban and the Duke of Chaumontel respectively was widely different. The Duke, at that moment, was approaching the Duchess, full of buoyant hope and almost in exuberant spirits, as we have already seen, and with what result, we have also seen. Lord Montalban was about to approach his daughter on the same subject, but he felt anything but buoyant hope or exuberant spirits; indeed, if by any intuition he could have known of the scene that was about to take place between the Duke and Duchess of Chaumontel, he would at that moment have felt it a relief to his mind. He appeared instinctively to shrink from what seemed to him an approaching ordeal. He could not tell why; indeed he scarcely knew that such a feeling was upon him, and yet undoubtedly it was strong within his breast. Was it a presentiment that his daughter would treat

with scorn the proposed alliance? It might have been so, and yet Augusta had never expressed any opinion leading to that inference or conclusion. It is true, that she had been imperious and perhaps occasionally contemptuously haughty towards the Marquis, but he was not the only one of her acquaintances who had been visited in the same way. But Lord Montalban did not know his daughter's heart. Perhaps, indeed, she was not entirely acquainted with it herself as yet. Be that as it may now, the acquaintanceship by both is soon to come.

Lord Montalban takes his way from the room in which he had held consultation with the Duke of Chaumontel in search of his daughter Augusta, and as he does so, very slowly, be it said, he ponders upon those various points and considerations to which we have attempted descriptively to allude.

We have recorded in a previous chapter how Lord Montalban was attracted to another scene as he passed along the chief corridor of Lord Templebloke's house, and, truth to say, he was not sorry to find in this attraction a self-excuse for procrastination in the matter that he had in hand. An opportunity, however, presented itself very shortly for carrying out his object, for Augusta Montalban and her antagonist did not continue their game after the untoward accident which had befallen the Marquis of Milltown.

"Augusta, my dear," said Lord Montalban, as his daughter was passing along the corridor with her companion; "I want to have a few minutes conversation with you."

He spoke so seriously, and in a tone that very nearly amounted to one of agitation, that Miss Montalban felt a little alarmed, and she said—

"Nothing the matter, dear papa, is there?"

"Oh nothing, dear, no. Step into this room." And Lord Montalban led his daughter into the very room in which he had so shortly before given an audience to the Duke of Chaumontel.

As soon as they were alone, Lord Montalban said—

"Augusta, my dear, I have had a visitor here this morning, who has suddenly taken a very great interest in you."

"Indeed! And who may that be?"

"A near connexion of ours."

"Do you say that, papa? Male or female?" inquired Miss Montalban.

"The Duke of Chaumontel," said Lord Montalban, with a peculiar expression on his countenance, as he watched to see if he could discover any particular effect

that was produced upon his daughter by the announcement.

This expression, of course, was born of that anxiety which he felt about the matter in hand, and which, now that he was in consultation with his daughter upon it, became more intensified than it was when he was alone, and when it first took possession of his mind.

"The Duke of Chaumontel," said Augusta, laughing; "what sudden interest can he have taken in me, and what is its object?"

"You did not observe, I daresay, the humiliation he felt yesterday at what occurred on the course—you know to what I allude."

If Lord Montalban had had the object of his conference with his daughter deeply at heart, this allusion would have been an unfortunate one for him. He may or may not have had that object at heart,

but the probability is that it was not seated deeply enough for that.

Of course Miss Montalban, as Lord Montalban had suggested, knew well enough to what he referred when he alluded to the occurrence of the previous day, and the instant the allusion was made her brow became clouded, and the recollection of the scene Lord Montalban instantly saw was likely to call up some of that indignation which she had exhibited at the time the incident referred to occurred.

"And why has the Duke come over to recall that scene?" she inquired.

"My dear Augusta, he has had no such object in view; it was a far higher one, far more honourable to us," replied Lord Montalban, a little scared by the bearing of his daughter.

"Indeed!" she cried; "how do you mean, papa?"

"My dear Augusta, he has felt deeply the humiliation that was brought upon the family yesterday."

Poor Lord Montalban, in his agitation he was getting deeper into difficulty every instant; that is, as we have remarked before, always assuming that he has the object he is endeavouring to disclose deeply at heart.

"Papa, there was no necessity for him to come here to commiserate with or to apologize to us upon the subject, for I should tell you that I had already come to a determination with respect to it."

"Indeed, my dear, and what is that?" inquired Lord Montalban, eagerly.

Without answering the question, his daughter said—

"If indeed the Duke had come over to recall his son from this house, he might have rendered us some reparation."

"Why us, Augusta, any more than

anybody else in this house?" inquired Lord Montalban, in a somewhat lighter tone, as though he had made a discovery which was a relief to him.

"Because the insult was more flagrant to us than to anyone else."

"Really, Augusta, I do not see the force of that remark."

"Is he not constantly forcing his inane society upon us? Did he not get himself invited here simply because he knew that we were to be of this party? and have I not been made the subject of ribald jests in connexion with his name?"

"You, Augusta? By whom, when, and where?" cried Lord Montalban, in a tone of much excitement.

"No matter," replied his daughter, in a calmer tone; "perhaps it is merely an inference of my own."

She did not add, however, that she had been in conversation that morning

with a young lady friend on the subject.

"But let us forget the scene of yesterday, dear papa, and tell me why the Duke of Chaumontel has visited you this morning on my account." And seeing that her father was still agitated, she put her arms round his neck.

Lord Montalban looked down into his daughter's face, and smiling upon her, he said—

"Augusta, you know that you are all the world to me—your happiness is my first consideration, my only hope; now, my darling, think for a moment, and see if the object of the Duke's visit here does not suggest itself to your mind."

Augusta Montalban looked into her father's face for a moment, and then said—

"Papa, I do not understand you; pray tell me."

The trial must be gone through, and

Lord Montalban braced himself up to the ordeal.

"Augusta, my dear," he said, "you know that our families are connected—not closely indeed, but still nearly—by blood."

"I know it, they are our kindred. What of that?"

"The Duke desires a still closer connexion," said Lord Montalban, instantly feeling trepidation at the thought that he had thus abruptly, in one sentence, rather obscure, it is true, made his daughter acquainted with the great event of the morning.

"I do not like the Duchess, papa, and you know it, and if the Duke desires that we should be more intimate, I cannot reciprocate any such desire."

His daughter had not apprehended his meaning then, and now Lord Montalban felt more embarrassed than before.

"My dear, you have misunderstood me. I did not mean that. The Duke desires that the two families should be more closely united, and that through you they should be linked together."

"In what way am I to become such a link, papa?"

"The Duke has proposed that you should be married."

At this intimation the countenance of Miss Montalban became suffused with a glow of indignation, as she exclaimed—

"I know now what it is you mean, papa, and I can understand what I thought a few moments ago was intentional mystery, and also the manner which you adopted, which was so unusual in you. Papa, the Duke has proposed that I should marry the Marquis of Milltown. Is it not so?" she cried, abruptly—so abruptly that Lord Montalban was totally

thrown off his guard, and for the moment was unable to reply.

"Say, dear papa, if that is not the meaning of the communication you have to make to me—say if I have not anticipated it."

"My dear, you have," said Lord Montalban, almost humbly.

"And what, papa, was your answer?"

"My dear Augusta, I am here to know what answer I shall give," said Lord Montalban, in a tone of relief.

"Then tell the Duke of Chaumontel this, dear papa, that as we are already kith and kin of his and of his race, we esteem that connexion honour enough, and do not desire to make it closer. I am sorry, dear papa, that you did not make this answer on the instant."

And so was Lord Montalban now. He, however, felt a very agreeable relief in the declaration his daughter had made, al-

though another source of embarrassment was looming upon him, and that was with regard to his making the decision of his daughter known to the Duke of Chaumontel.

"My dear Augusta," he said, with his usual gaiety of manner restored, "I really did not think that Milltown was so obnoxious to you."

"Obnoxious!" exclaimed his daughter, in a tone of indignant scorn; "could such a brainless inanity be otherwise than obnoxious to me, or to any one who was not absorbed in frivolity?"

"Why does she speak with such bitter energy?" thought Lord Montalban to himself, and then he said aloud—"My dear Augusta, do not think that the incident of yesterday was intended for anything beyond what it was, the mere ridiculous exhibition of a most weak young man."

"Oh, papa, and you would have had me unite myself to such a person!" said Miss Montalban, bitterly.

Lord Montalban felt the reproach rather keenly as he replied—"Believe me no, my dear Augusta. It was only a mere suggestion—it was for you to make your choice wholly uncontrolled and unfettered. It is past now, and the matter is at an end."

"One word more, papa," said Miss Montalban, in a tone of decision; "we leave here to-day."

"To-day, my dear!"

"To-day!"

And immediately after this interview, when he came to think about it, Lord Montalban was very glad that this decision, sudden as it was, had been arrived at by his daughter; for truth to say, he was quite at a loss how to convey the result of the proposition to the Duke of

Chaumontel. Had he known all he need not have felt any anxiety on the matter. The Duke was equally embarrassed with regard to the decision of the Duchess; and so it was as well that the two did not meet that day upon the course or elsewhere; for if they had done so, in all probability, they would have avoided each other. They did not meet for some time afterwards, and the subject was never again alluded to by either of them.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OPENING OF THE COURTS IN NOVEMBER.—SILVESTER LANGDALE AT WESTMINSTER.

THE summer has passed away, and the indigenous fog of the British Isles holds possession of the huge metropolis of an evening. In order thoroughly to enjoy and appreciate that national fog, shoals of tourists, from every locality where Nature blooms in freshness, displays herself in grandeur, or exhibits the charms that in the autumn-time she invitingly puts forth, have hurried home by those various iron channels that supply the circulation of London. In the interval that has elapsed since the Goodwood meeting, Silvester Langdale has had

many opportunities of displaying his equine purchase to advantage by the side of Miss Montalban in Rotten Row; but that was, of course, before Lord Montalban and his daughter had taken their departure for their seat down in the midland counties, whither Silvester Langdale had engaged himself to follow them to enjoy the hospitalities of the Christmas-time.

The winter season in London may be said to be inaugurated by the opening of the law courts at Westminster. To this ceremony Silvester Langdale had looked forward with much anxiety and interest for the anticipated business to pour in upon him, but not in Gray's Inn Square. The chambers of Silvester Langdale, Esq., barrister-at-law, are now in the Inner Temple, and they look out upon that beautiful oasis in the desert of London, round which, at the time when the courts

are opening at Westminster, and all the locality becomes busy, and the hum of human kindness echoes over the spot, the bright and variegated chrysanthemums bud out in all their glittering glory, and become, for a few days' time, a London sight.

In those chambers Abel Barnes takes especial pride, and keeps them with tender care. He is Silvester Langdale's devoted servitor, and he has told his wife at home, that if the young barrister had been brought up all his life to the saddle, he could not have been a more expert horseman; indeed, Abel Barnes tells his wife that his belief is, that there is nothing in the way of ability, talent, and cleverness, that his master is not expert in.

The opening of the courts at Westminster is, of course, a novel sight to Silvester Langdale, and he takes his way to Westminster Hall betimes on the

morning of the first day of term. He finds no interest in the procession of the learned judges to their several courts, which, in truth to say, has more of the ludicrous than the dignified in its exhibition. He proceeds at once to one of the back seats of "the outer bar," as it is technically termed, the quarter to which the juniors are first relegated. This court was the Queen's Bench, and there was a large attendance of the members of the bar and the general public, consisting mostly of people who have no earthly business there, are squeezing and crushing to obtain a sight of the august and mysterious personages who sit enthroned beneath the canopy that is adorned with the royal arms, and made awful in appearance by the substantial sword of justice that hangs rather dangerously above the back of the wig of the Lord Chief Justice.

The student of that high civilization which is so conspicuous in our British law courts cannot fail to find much that is worthy of reflection in the proceedings that take place on the first day of term in November in our courts of law at Westminster. Such student may be an ardent admirer of the institution of trial by jury. If so, he may find some of his preconceived notions with regard to it rather shaken by what he perchance may have to observe. If he be a cynical student, he will not fail to be much gratified by the manner in which unmistakable fraud is pleasantly coquetted with; and he will be amused at strange arguments—we might almost say grotesque arguments — that are gravely listened to, and occasionally acted upon, by those reverend seigniors who sit in banco there; and still more will he be gratified to find the stoical indifference

that is manifested by all who are operating in that ancient court, with regard to individual rights, and what the outer world is prejudiced enough to consider the better feelings of the human heart.

And then, again, the general student of our laws, customs, and manners, will not fail to observe the facility with which the learned judges make the law as well as administer it; and it will require but little observation, sagacity, or penetration, to discover that those learned functionaries have a strong predilection in favour of the unwritten law, as against the statute law by Parliament enacted; and so he will occasionally find strange efforts made to throw obstructions in the way of the due development of any new statute that is introduced to the notice of the puissant court.

The legal mind is a strange agglomeration, of which it is not for us, in

such a place as this, to attempt the analyzation.

Silvester Langdale is a close observer of all that is passing in the court, and it must be admitted that he himself was an object of some little curiosity and scrutiny in the court; for his fame—so suddenly acquired, and since so well maintained—had, of course, preceded him thither. He had, it must also be remembered, made himself rather conspicuous in the world of fashion, as it is so well reflected in Rotten Row; and hence, with some of the brightest ones around him, he had obtained the reputation of being a young man with great private means—an assumed fact, from which they reasoned that it was ever thus that luck attended upon the wealthy. "If he had been a poor devil who had nothing but his brains and his native luck to depend upon," they argued, "he never would have obtained the chance

that has so miraculously fallen upon him."

Silvester Langdale has listened with much attention and interest to the proceedings that have been going on around him; in which, however, the "outer bar" have little or nothing to do. He is still listening, and still with great interest, when his attention is called to some one at the side of the court, and that some one is no other than Marl Baskerville. The sight of the lawyer money-lender recalls to the mind of the young barrister an obligation, of which he had thought nothing until that moment from the time when it was incurred.

Silvester Langdale immediately left his place in the "outer bar," and joined Baskerville in the purlieus of the court.

"I know what you are come about," he said, as they took their way into Westminster Hall; and, to tell you the truth,

I have lately been in such a whirl that I have forgotten all about it."

"Indeed," said Marl Baskerville, and he did so as though he were much surprised; but he was not surprised. Who better than he knew that Silvester Langdale had suddenly entered into a brilliant circle, in which he had partially lost himself? and who felt more satisfaction than he, if his inward thoughts could have been revealed, in the knowledge?

"I suppose you want the money, Mr. Baskerville?" said Silvester Langdale, with rather a dismal smile.

"I do indeed, Mr. Langdale; in fact, I never was so pressed in my life."

This was wholly untrue; he had never at any time been stronger in funds, and the probability is that if Silvester Langdale had approached Marl Baskerville with the money in his hand he would have been disappointed, and not gratified.

"I am very sorry to hear it," said Silvester Langdale, earnestly; "but the fact is, you see, I calculated a few days too early. When you were kind enough to lend me the money—"

"When I obtained it for you," suggested Marl Baskerville, with a peculiar expression of his wild eye.

"Well, at all events, when the money was advanced, I spoke of the beginning of November, and I meant, of course, the end, you know."

"Did you?" said Marl Baskerville quite ingenuously.

"I did indeed. Why, wasn't it but natural that I should?

"Humph! Well, I suppose so; but what am I to do?" asked Baskerville.

"Well, that is the question that I must put to you for myself," Silvester Langdale said, laughing.

"It is embarrassing for both of us, I

admit, and it would be a cruel turn of fortune for you to be crippled just at this moment; I would do anything to prevent that, Mr. Langdale; I would indeed."

How earnestly he spoke! and in a tone of feeling, too.

"I have observed that during the season you have been a frequent guest at Lord Montalban's," Baskerville said. "I have much to do with Lord Montalban too."

Was this a subtle allusion of Marl Baskerville's? Had he some occult motive in making it? It may be so; at all events, it had a visible effect upon Silvester Langdale. He turned and looked full in the face of the inexplicable man by his side, and that peculiar expression of Baskerville's eyes to which Count Moule had referred was very perceptible. It was wild and weird-like; but Silvester Langdale could only for a moment observe it, as the instant their eyes met Marl Basker-

ville looked down, as though oppressed by his companion's gaze. The close observer would have discovered that this was always the case when anyone looked full into Marl Baskerville's face. He seemed incapable of bearing the gaze full in his own eyes of those of another person; and hence, when anyone was in earnest conversation with him, he invariably looked down upon the ground—except, indeed, when he was in a room in such a position that he could sit with his back to the light, and place his face in the shade, as it were—a habit of his to which we have previously alluded. In such case the dazzle of the light, we presume, prevented the gazer's looking fixedly into the eyes of Marl Baskerville as he sat before them, although it was believed by those who had observed the practice, that it was adopted by Marl Baskerville in order to enable him to read, through the expression of the countenance,

the emotions of those by whom he was consulted.

Although the observation by Silvester Langdale of the strange expression of Marl Baskerville's eyes was but momentary, yet it almost startled him; and as the money-lending lawyer drooped his eyes upon the pavement upon which they were walking, he looked earnestly into that strange countenance, strongly marked as it was. But with his eyes bent upon the ground, the face of Marl Baskerville exhibited no emotion; it was almost placid; there was not the slightest trace of passion about it. It was perfectly calm beneath those overhanging, drooping eyelids; and not once during that interview in Westminster Hall did the eyes of Baskerville and the young barrister meet again.

But Marl Baskerville and Silvester Langdale continued to pace the echoing

flags of the broad pavement of Westminster Hall in earnest conversation, and it was evidently an animated conversation too, and gradually became pleasing to both, for they laughed and became merry, both of them, as they walked backwards and forwards from one end to the other of that ancient hall. At length they stopped at the entrance to the Court of Queen's Bench, and on the steps thereof Marl Baskerville took his leave of the young barrister, saying—

"Very good; then I will be with you, Mr. Langdale, in the Temple to-morrow morning."

And as Silvester Langdale took his way along the dark and dismal corridor that leads into the chief court of justice of Great Britain, he was evidently light-hearted and full of spirits. Half an hour ago the chain that he had forged in Gray's Inn three months before was be-

ginning to chafe him—at the very moment, indeed, when he made the discovery that it was fixed upon him. It chafed him no longer now, and yet he had not removed it; he had simply bound it tighter round him in such a manner as not to feel it for the present. He had simply, so to speak, doubled its strength, or was about to do so; but the binding links hung lightly on him, even as though they were fleecy in their texture and were soft.

The Michaelmas term went smoothly on, and the young barrister's good fortune never seemed to flag; it was an uninterrupted stream, and his name became famous in the ancient halls of Westminster. In the jury cases he was sought with eagerness, especially by the speculative attorneys, whose business depended much upon the success in trial of these cases. To such practitioners Silvester

Langdale was an acquisition indeed in Westminster Hall; for his commanding figure, his noble face, his sonorous voice, and his emphatic, impassioned eloquence, led juries captive, and drew verdicts easily. The brilliant advocate in his appeal to the jury—for Silvester Langdale usually found himself retained for the defence—was followed by the prosy judge, who droned his summing up, and thus made stronger by contrast the fervent appeal that had just been made to them. Yes, fortune not only favoured Silvester Langdale, but it seemed also to favour those who were associated with him, in whose behalf he pleaded.

What is good fortune?—luck? Is luck as good fortune incident to humanity in partial distribution? It certainly might be argued that it is. We know, upon the authority of the ancient adage, that perseverance will prevail, and books

have been written to chronicle and register the instances in which the truth of the adage has been practically and triumphantly demonstrated; but we have no records that can tell the instances in which hard perseverance through long years of toil and sharp anxiety has failed. If the adage, which we know so well, anent the sure results of perseverance, were true incontrovertibly, and were universal, there would be but two classes in all the world of civilization. But it is not universally true, even if it be partially true. But there is an adage that is somewhat analogous to the one that is never absent from the schoolboy's copy-book, and that is, that it is better to be born lucky than rich. That adage is universal in its application, and is incontrovertible in its truth. There is no profession in all this world of enlightened civilization that does not show it. There is no class,

however obscure, that does not furnish strange instances of its general truth. The wide world over is its illustration, and all the men and women in it are the agents that supply its demonstration.

Silvester Langdale knew not his birthplace, and he had never known a parent. He was an orphan, without a blood relation in all this world that he had ever known. He was cast out friendless upon the wide world, and he had fallen upon a sunny spot, and beneath the fairest influences. In his case perseverance had no share in producing his good fortune; but he might, even at the moment in which he stepped out into his new career, have seen around him those who had persevered long and anxiously, but who had never known success, and who never would. Silvester Langdale never moralized upon this, for his surroundings in this respect were not apparent to him; but if

he had moralized upon the subject, and had reasoned it out, he would inevitably have arrived at the conclusion that there was universal truth in the old adage that declares it to be better to be born lucky than rich.

CHAPTER XIII.

A FASHIONABLE ASSEMBLY.

SILVESTER LANGDALE is now sailing upon the fullest tide of prosperity. He is indeed both lucky and rich, for a large income is pouring in upon him, and he has become a celebrity in Westminster Hall. The trumpet of fame has been so pertinacious in its proclamation of his name that whenever the intimation is publicly made that he is to appear in any special cause, the court in which he pleads is crowded with an intent audience, who are not attracted by the merits or incidents of the cause under trial so much as the defence of the young advocate.

And Silvester Langdale has become an

acquisition in fashionable society, and his name appears very frequently amongst the guests who are conspicuous in great assemblies in great houses, which are the residences of the highest and the noblest in the land.

Overlooking one of the most charming parks in Europe is a noble house that stands out prominently in an Italian terrace in the west end of London. A brilliant burst of light comes from the windows and brings out the forms of the high trees that ornament the park and form a kind of bulwark to the verdant scene beyond. Round in front of the great house long lines of carriages bespeak the character of the assembly within. Gorgeous saloons have, for this night, and, indeed, it is frequently too, been thrown open to the *élite* of the high fashion that rules in the west end of London. The lady of one of the chief Ministers of Eng-

land holds one of those *levées* which are almost emblematic of the greatness of the nation whose affairs her lord assists in administering.

And sometimes those assemblies are a strange combination, politically, socially, and generally, but it is not for us to criticize them in that respect, or perhaps in any other.

The sounds of soft music float through the air and seem in the distance to blend with the breeze. The windows of the brilliant mansion are thrown widely open, and the gay sounds come forth and might be suggestive of a scene in fairyland, except that one should scarcely find the smallest bit of fairyland in such close propinquity to the Almonry in Westminster—that peculiar property that is an appanage to the wealth of the ecclesiastics who rule in Westminster Abbey, and who in their enlightened wisdom

admit or exclude the effigies of the mighty dead within that glorious fane.

To this centre of brilliant festivity—to this glittering assembly in the Italian terrace that looks out upon the park, Silvester Langdale was a bidden guest.

All the world's wealth, it may be said, was represented there, and he found himself surrounded by those to whom Fortune had been more than lavish of her favours and her luxuries. Representatives of all the richest states and nations of the world had assembled in that house, and as Silvester Langdale passed along those brilliant saloons he scanned the men and women there assembled in that scene so new to him, and the suggestion came into his mind, "Does truth show equal lustre with the gems that deck these forms that dazzle as they pass?"

He might have moralized still deeper; the spirit that impels a man to actions

that the good would shun, is shared by those around equally with the petty tradesman who shall cheat his starving customers—with this only difference, that the members of one class are held to be guilty of knavery, while the others practise intrigue. How often has that word intrigue covered what the virtuous should call crime and falsehood!

Silvester Langdale walked on through splendid saloons redolent of youth, beauty, and wealth. The scene was dazzling to him, and, absorbed in admiration mixed with wonder, he passed on to seek for Augusta Montalban. Every room was filled, and apparent happiness and pleasure reigned throughout the whole. He was, however, turned aside from pursuing his search by encountering an eminent member of the bar, who, recognizing Langdale, warmly greeted him. This gentleman, whose name was Suetonius

Harblend, though he followed his profession, did not care much about it; for he was wealthy, he was conscientious, and he was philosophical—a rare combination in his profession indeed.

This gentleman and Silvester Langdale took a seat in one of the recesses, and they gradually drifted into a kind of critical examination of the company around them.

A merchant prince has passed them, and the conversation turns on honour, as developed in commercial dealings.

"The man's life," says Silvester Langdale's companion, "has been an uninterrupted course of commercial success, demonstrating in his person the truth of the adage that it is better to be born lucky than rich."

"Has not his own conduct had something to do with it?" inquired Langdale.

"Oh, the world esteems him a strictly honourable man; honourable in all his dealings; but the estimate we put on what the world calls honesty is mistaken mostly. The world may ring with the loud praises of a merchant prince, and his highest claim to honour may be that he has been always true and upright in his dealings. That praise is much, but it may be exaggerated. It has been the main stay of his fortune and his successful career. Without it he could not have hurried on to the bright goal he has attained. Award him praise for his great enterprise, but not for honesty alone, for as well might he be praised and receive high honours for that he refrained from maiming his right arm. Look at his charity at home, and test him there; find out how he looks behind him in his past life, and mark his conduct then."

"Then you think the honour of a

merchant is part of his stock-in-trade?" inquired Silvester Langdale.

"It is the good that shall support his house, for without that prop no man shall rise. But that is not honesty as it should be. Honesty, as the world goes now, has too much about it of individuality. The worldly honest man looks alone to the straightforwardness of his own dealings and his own business. He looks not beyond his own counting-house. So that he is honest himself, he cares not with whom he deals. The character of another is nothing to him, so long as he can profit by intercourse with such a person. Nay, it is not uncommon to find the strictly honest man of the world prefer to deal with those whose course of life may not be pure. He reaps the harvest while they must brave the tempest. He stands upon his own integrity, and so is honoured. The honesty of the

great world in which we move is but a shining trick which dazzles but to deceive."

"You seem to argue for me," said the young man; "you point the course my thoughts would take."

"What is commoner," continued Silvester Langdale's companion, "than the phrase, 'Honour amongst thieves?' Analyze the honour there spoken of, and you shall find that it approaches nearer to that pure abstraction which all men seemingly so much venerate. Most men are honest through fear. Look at the great man that rules and guides a giant company, whose ramifications affect the very prosperity of the entire country. He stands before the world untainted. There he is, a reputable man, and yet he fears. And what is his fear? That fear that arises from an unstable honour. The world esteems him honest, and so

far he is without a stain. His honour is the honesty of commerce. He dares not do an overt dishonourable act, but he will pander to those whose characters could not be named with his own in the world. They are unscrupulous, and might injure him. Those who share the honesty which he exhibits, and who are those he fears—for they form his world—would readily listen to the tainted men, and gladly find their neighbour's honour jeopardized. And so this worldly honour, day by day and hour by hour, carries on a wretched warfare, and so men's minds become obscured and warped."

"But do you think that genuine honour does not live amongst the class to which you allude?" inquired Langdale.

"It lives, but does not thrive?" replied the elder barrister.

"Where may we find it then?" again inquired the young man.

"The search would be tedious, because the object sought is found in strange localities. Honour in its essence will sometimes—and very often, too—find shelter beneath a ragged coat. It seems instinctively to fly from commerce as an ungenial atmosphere. Charity and Honour appear to me to thrive in company, and Charity seems to love the ragged coat as though she shunned the means of her existence."

"Surely you cannot look upon the great charities of this mighty city without admiration?"

"No, in themselves they are, indeed, high ornaments upon a nation's greatness; and though we may not question motives in such a cause, yet ostentation may claim to be a great supporter of those great designs. The hour is growing late; but come, we had better be moving.

"Ah, Harblend!" exclaimed a gentle-

man, who appeared to be between fifty and sixty years of age, of rather florid complexion, and in whose countenance there seemed to lurk a perpetual smile, which constantly struggled to become a laugh—"ah, Harblend! of all men, I'm glad to see you here. How is it I can't get to see you more frequently? Why will you not come to me oftener?"

"Oh, my Lord," replied Mr. Harblend, smiling, "diplomacy and myself, I need not tell your Lordship, do not agree very well together."

"I know it, Harblend, I know it," replied the noble Earl, in a tone which seemed to express that it would be folly to dispute that fact. "Harblend," continued the noble Lord, "I'm not going to try to make an ambassador of you; I wish I could."

"I take the double compliment," replied Harblend, "and appreciate it. I

would that I could be your ambassador where my hope could lead me; but, as you say, diplomacy is not for me, nor I for it."

"What is diplomacy?" smilingly inquired the noble Earl, passing his arm through that of Harblend, and walking with him down the room.

"Rather let me ask, what is not diplomacy in the circle in which your lordship moves?"

"Yes; but diplomacy, as between nations, can you do without it?—is it not a necessary evil?"

"An evil undoubtedly, but of its necessity I cannot believe. I look upon the whole system of national diplomacy as having originated in the bad passions of men in ages past away, when despotism flourished; it has grown into a kind of necessity, and is universal. The deep root it has taken gives it stability, and it

will go on and flourish while a privileged class has power, and so long as the masses remain ignorant."

"But what is there in the system of diplomacy that you object to?" inquired the noble Earl: "I am anxious for your opinion on this subject, for I need not tell you that it is a matter that is not only exciting attention, but which will require more hereafter."

"The system of diplomacy," returned Mr. Harblend, "as existing between nations, seems to me to proceed upon the assumption too often adopted in private life by individuals, that all men are rogues. Now this is a false assumption, for in my view, diplomacy, more than anything else, is calculated to produce deceit, and something worse. The surest way to lead a man to take you in, is to suspect all his actions, and let him know it. I think, my lord, I may say that you

look with something more than doubt upon the utility of these diplomatic missions and their object, as they are at present established."

"You tax me too far," replied the noble lord, with a smile; "as I said before, I look upon them as necessary evils. They may, as you say, have originated in times far different from the present, and with different objects, but so did the streets of the city of London. We would fain alter the narrow, confined, and ill-ventilated arteries of the City, but that the task is far beyond our means. We may gradually reform them, but at once to construct them all anew is out of the reach of even England's enterprise."

"The streets of London are old monuments of the wisdom, the foresight, and the knowledge of our ancestors," replied Harblend, with a meaning smile; "but there is no parallel; it is a false simile

that you have advanced. The streets of London, though ill contrived and badly formed, are nevertheless (the truism is so apparent that I need scarcely speak it, but your lordship introduced the subject) absolutely necessary as they stand and as London exists. It is indeed a stretch of metaphor to institute a comparison between them and our diplomatic system. Now, that system is an excrescence on society, which, if it cannot be eradicated, should be at all events reduced and modified. In my view it is a vicious system, and one which, in its present construction, is calculated to entail more misery upon the nations of the earth than even bad internal legislation — though perhaps," half mused Mr. Harblend, "one is the result of the other. What," continued he, with more animation, "is an ambassador?"

His noble companion smiled and bowed for Mr. Harblend to proceed.

"What is an ambassador? Take them all, and examine them upon the point; one shall tell you that he is a high officer appointed to reside at a foreign court, to give splendid dinners, at which he is to listen and pick up what he can, and faithfully transmit it home. That is, I am sorry to say, a very general notion of the duties of an ambassador, as understood by ambassadors themselves; and as they are of the most numerous, so they are of the worst class. The eavesdropping ambassador is amongst nations what the busybody is in private life. He always injures those whom he attempts to serve; and although he believes himself particularly cunning, he is invariably seen through, and treated accordingly. Another class are those who, having been articled as it were to the science of diplomacy, consider that nothing must be dreamt of in their locality without their concurrence and

advice being first sought. These perhaps are the most harmless class of ambassadors; they look solemn, bow the head with dignity, express acquiescence by a look, and so believe they have fulfilled their functions.

"Of another class is he who looks upon himself as the representative of a great nation, sent to a foreign court for the purpose of showing how easy it is to spend £20,000 a year when drawn from a nation's purse. But surely this is not a subject upon which I should address you, my Lord, you who, I know, are so well acquainted with the matter in all its bearings."

"You would reform it then," said the noble lord, interrupting Mr. Harblend, and without noticing the apologetic appeal.

"Reform," replied Mr. Harblend, "and at once; and above all, if you must have

ambassadors, choose your men as you say you choose your consuls. Let them be men whose pretensions are not those of having 'served their time' as diplomatists. Choose them as the judges are chosen, for their conspicuous ability; and, above all, let them be men whose rectitude shall teach them that, though their country is their home, they belong to the brotherhood of mankind."

"I fear you ask too much," hesitated the noble Earl.

"I fear so too," replied Harblend, "as the world goes now. But my hope runs onward to the future, and I think I see in the far distance that we are approaching a condition which looks not alone to home, but embraces the wide world in its beneficence. Let me hope, my Lord, that your agency may be great in carrying us to that goal. Farewell, your guests await you."

Mr. Suetonius Harblend abruptly turned

away to seek Silvester Langdale, whom he found seated on an ottoman, contemplating the scene before him. Mr. Harblend seated himself by the side of Langdale.

"Do you see that man with the sinister expression of countenance, and bushy hair tinged with red?" inquired Harblend.

"Leaning against the pillar there?" replied Langdale.

Mr. Harblend nodded.

"Observe with what an eager eye he is watching the lady who is conversing with yonder tall cavalier, whose moustaches extend to his chin. That lady is the wife of the man with the red hair, and as he lounges there he is now hatching a hellish plot against her peace of mind, and for his own aggrandisement. The miserable wretch as yet stands alone in his infamy, for he has no accomplices, although the scheme he is now brooding

over will lead him to seek many who, with minds black as his own, will assist him in his hellish designs. You shall some day hear more of him, and how his plot succeeds."

"His eye rests like that of a crouching tiger upon his wife," exclaimed Langdale.

"And like the tiger he will act," replied Harblend, "for he will make the spring upon his prey; and, foiled in his black attempt, will shrink away and hide himself behind ignominy, contempt, and execration. Of all the plots that are hatched in the great splendour of the metropolis of England, that which is now teeming in that man's brain at this moment is one of the blackest."

"How have you become acquainted with it?" inquired Langdale.

"He has one confederate—I made a mistake before—he has one, and that one, whom I knew some years ago, I recently

met, and in the course of conversation he dropped some facts which I sifted, and you have the result."

"But will you take no steps to frustrate the plot of which you speak with so much abhorrence as being in course of action?" inquired Langdale.

"I have done so," said Mr. Harblend, rising. "I have taken such steps as shall lay bare the hellish conspiracy, and consign its author to everlasting infamy. You shall see further of it shortly. Let us proceed round the saloons."

The two companions walked leisurely through the throng of fashion and beauty that surrounded them. In a few minutes afterwards Silvester Langdale met Augusta Montalban, and in an instant all Mr. Suetonius Harblend's philosophy was forgotten by the young barrister in the bright happiness that Lord Montalban's daughter's presence shed around him.

CHAPTER XIV.

AUGUSTA MONTALBAN AND MARIE WINGRAVE IN THE HUNTING-FIELD.

THE circuit which Silvester Langdale had selected was the one in which Lord Montalban's seat was situated, and this selection was certainly not an accidental one. It was made before the young barrister went to London, simply because its very centre was the quaint old city in which he had passed his youth. It was, therefore, but a coincidence that the seat of Lord Montalban should be situated in one of the counties which the circuit embraced; but it was certainly a most pleasing, and perhaps a most fortunate one. Undoubtedly Silvester Langdale thought it was a most fortunate one.

Lord Montalban's seat was in a hunting county, and that noble Lord and his daughter always passed the hunting season at their place in the country. As we have in a previous chapter intimated, they scarcely ever omitted to be at the cover's side. They were the most brilliant members of a brilliant hunt, and Miss Montalban entered with all her heart and soul into the spirit of the chase; it was a passion with her.

It is the height of the hunting season, and it is at the same time the close of the winter assize on the circuit of which Silvester Langdale is now a member. He is therefore in the immediate neighbourhood of Lord Montalban's place. A large and more than usually brilliant gathering is expected at the cover side the day after Langdale will finish his labours on the circuit. He has therefore sent his trusty serving-man, Abel Barnes, to London, to

bring down the hunter that was purchased at the obscure repository that is under the shadow of St. Paul's, in the city of London. Silvester Langdale intends to be at the meeting at the cover side,—a dangerous resolve, it may be, because he is not only not experienced in going across country, but he has never yet tried his hand or seat at the operation. He, however, intends to be discreet and cautious, and therein perchance may be discovered a danger to him—or, at all events, to his hopes. He will be near Miss Montalban, and he must have a care lest, in his horsemanship, he should be subjected in her mind to a comparison between himself and the Marquis of Milltown. A comparison between the two has been mentally instituted by her, as will be found recorded in a former chapter, but it was a comparison that had nothing whatever to do with prowess in the field.

Silvester Langdale was resolved. Augusta Montalban had seen his horse in Rotten Row, and had admired him much, nay, she had expressed a desire to see him in the country. The opportunity now favourably presented itself, and Langdale was determined not to allow it to pass.

And on this same day upon which the young barrister is to make his first appearance in the hunting-field, another appearance is to be made of a purchase that was effected on the same afternoon as his own. Marie Wingrave had known, of course, of the brilliant gathering that was to take place, and she has come down to the spot with "Raglan," the noblest hunter, as she boasted, in all the land.

It is a glorious day upon which this brilliant meeting takes place, and the gathering at the cover side is as extensive and numerous as it is brilliant. The

Marquis of Milltown is there, and is magnificently made up; Count Moule is there, upon a steed as sombre-looking as himself; and our hero is by the side of Lord Montalban, next to whom is Miss Montalban, superbly mounted.

Silvester Langdale had not donned the scarlet hunting coat; his courage was not equal to that, although in all other respects he was duly attired according to the recognised fashion of the chase.

There can be no doubt that the young barrister felt nervous when they arrived at the cover side, albeit he had practised much in London at the leaping-bar; but his nervousness gradually evaporated as the crowd of horsemen accumulated round him. The scene was, indeed, exhilarating, and made him feel certainly a new excitement. The country, although it was the depth of winter-time, and all the trees were bare, looked charming beneath the

glowing sun—that bright sun that, in the country, is sometimes, though not often, seen in December.

The place of meeting was some extensive and undulating downs, which were soft as velvet, and which were thickly covered with furze, so that, although it was the depth of winter, there was a bright green all around.

The brilliant gathering is assembled in one of the valleys of the green downs, and the huntsmen have commenced to beat a neighbouring thicket, when an arrival takes place that creates a sensation amongst the members of the hunt, and this sensation is various in its effects upon various people. As Marie Wingrave dashes up to the assembled group upon the magnificent "Raglan," she reins in her steed, and looks defiantly to where Augusta Montalban is standing.

Lord Montalban has done much to

obtain a prohibition against the admission of Marie Wingrave to the privileges of the hunt of which he is a member; but his efforts have been fruitless, for the lady has many powerful friends in that association. She is not only received at the meetings, but there are those of the number who do her honour and pay her respect where she appears.

There is an expression of triumph on her flushed countenance now as she looks across at Augusta Montalban, who returns the look with one of scornful defiance. It is manifest that the bosom of the peer's daughter is swelling with rage, and there is passion in her heart. The expression upon their countenances, as they gaze upon each other, is widely different, but the likeness between the two is very striking. The character of the beauty of each is the same, and the bearing of them both is similar. They might almost be

twin sisters. Perhaps it is this knowledge that gives poignancy to Augusta Montalban's feeling with regard to the gay intruder upon that aristocratic circle, for such is the light in which she looks upon Marie Wingrave.

Of course, the candid and good-natured people of that exclusive circle attributed the feeling, which Miss Montalban never attempted to disguise, to the promptings of jealousy; because, they argued, it was plain enough for anybody with ordinary sagacity to perceive that Miss Montalban was trying to entrap the Marquis of Milltown, and a splendid catch, no doubt, it would be; but surely the Marquis had a right to please himself, even though his choice should fall upon Marie Wingrave. And then the young friends of the Marquis of Milltown would laugh, and say it was not the sort of thing that they should do; but then they were not the

Marquis of Milltown; but this they would say, that if the Marquis of Milltown chose to take a fancy to Marie Wingrave, and stick to it, damn it, they didn't see why Miss Montalban should take on so much about it.

How little they knew Augusta Montalban's heart!—as little, indeed, as they knew of the scene that took place on the lawn in front of the grand stand in Goodwood Park. She looked now with something like loathing upon the Marquis of Milltown; and so far from her feeling being such as that with which they credited her, she had never harboured one worldly thought with regard to any matter that affects the heart; and those who knew her best knew this well enough. She was wayward, she was high-spirited—nay, she may be said to have had a tinge of chivalry about her; and that she was proud, and scornful, and determined, we

have had some opportunities of observing, and shall probably meet with others.

Marie Wingrave is courteously welcomed by those in her immediate neighbourhood, and the Marquis of Milltown takes off his hat to her gallantly, and she returns his salute gracefully, at the same time casting a look of conquest over to where Augusta Montalban is sitting upon her horse, with her father on one side and Silvester Langdale on the other.

But now the exhilarating cry is heard that scatters that goodly company over the line of country through which the fox has headed.

With wild impetuosity Augusta Montalban dashes down the slope upon which she is standing, and in a few minutes she is close up with the hounds, which are now in full cry, and are just taking to the open. There is a thick cluster of horsemen around her, and her father is by her

side—Silvester Langdale, perhaps judiciously, being a little in the rear. The late excitement of Augusta Montalban has vanished all, and given place to another of a far more exhilarating nature. Her heart and soul, as we have said, were in the chase, and her heart and soul are now following the fox, as he is heading away yonder to the open country that is a plain for miles away.

The run is an exciting one, indeed, and it is followed eagerly. The whole field is well mounted, and nobody is in distress as yet. Proudly Miss Montalban holds her course, herself and horse sweeping across each hedge and other obstacle like an elegant machine. But not far distant from her, like the reflection of herself, glides swiftly on and across each obstacle, as elegantly and lightly too, Marie Wingrave.

The horsemen of the hunt gaze on

these two with admiration, and with as much interest as that which actuates them in following the chase.

And then they fly from field to field, and over hedges and dangerous brooks, and thus the chase is kept unflaggingly up; but the time is coming when the pace will tell upon that gallant field, so numerous and so full of spirit lately. Still with the lead, and close upon the trail is Augusta Montalban; and still even with her, and in the same field now, is Marie Wingrave,—both as full of fire and energy, and as ardent, as when the chase commenced; but many of the hunt who started with them are distressed behind them, and but the stouter few are left close up with them. That few cannot fail to observe that at every field the space between the two fair equestrians is narrowed, and now they are almost side by side. And as they gallop on in

close propinquity, passion flashes from the eyes of both. Indeed, it is plain to see that they are maddening with excitement. And now the daring opponent of Augusta Montalban is manifestly struggling with baffled rage, for she instinctively feels that the noble "Raglan" is tiring under her. The blood runs madly through her veins, and her eyes glare as she discovers that Augusta Montalban has perceived the incipient distress of the stout "Raglan;" for in the eyes of Lord Montalban's daughter there is a look of triumph, for she feels her own steed is stalwart still. This Marie Wingrave does not fail to observe, and a sudden impulse lightens up her countenance. They are crossing a rather heavy field, and are approaching a thick-set hedge, on the other side of which is a yawning ditch, and beyond that a heavy ploughed field. She probably feels that the noble "Raglan" will be hope-

lessly beaten in that ploughed field beyond, and she has conceived a purpose which her maddened thoughts suggest, and which in its execution will require a nerve that cannot shrink. Side by side, Augusta Montalban and Marie Wingrave dash across the heavy field, the peer's daughter holding a slight lead; they approach the thick set hedge; they rise together in the air, and with a wild shriek, the daring, and ambitious, and maddened Marie Wingrave, with a sudden jerk at her rein, causes her horse to swerve heavily against Augusta Montalban, and amidst a cry of horror from those who are behind them, they both roll heavily over into the excavation on the other side.

In the next instant Lord Montalban and several of the leading members of the hunt rush up to the spot, and they find that Miss Montalban has risen un-

hurt from her fall; but she is gazing, terror-stricken, upon the beautiful form that is lying near her, motionless. As her father joins her it is evident that all her recent passion has passed away, and in its place is now a feeling of deep solicitude for one upon whom she lately looked with a feeling somewhat akin to hatred.

"You are not hurt, my darling?" cried Lord Montalban, anxiously, to his daughter, as he came up to her side.

"No, no; not in the least," she answered, hastily: "but she—oh, my God! —I fear that she is dead."

And, indeed, it did appear as though the unfortunate Marie Wingrave had been killed in the desperate effort she had made.

All the recent feeling towards Marie Wingrave is gone, and her woman's heavenly instincts gush up, rushing in

her breast, as Miss Montalban kneels beside the inanimate form of the beautiful girl who is lying upon that cold bank. She hastily tears open the bosom of her riding habit, and anxiously places her delicate hand over the region of the heart. She listens, as it were, for an instant, and then, with pleasure beaming in her countenance, she cries,—

"Her heart is beating; she is not dead!"

And Augusta Montalban was nearly sinking senseless on the ground herself.

A messenger was hastily despatched to a farmhouse, that fortunately was very near, and in a few minutes the necessary appliances were produced for carrying Marie Wingrave to the house, and she was carefully borne senseless from the spot.

And there could have been no more anxious watcher by her side than was Augusta Montalban, who accompanied

the inanimate form of the beautiful girl to the farmhouse, and saw her laid upon a couch, and with her own hands applied restoratives. And the emotion was sweet and grateful that she felt when she saw those large and lustrous blue eyes of the lately senseless girl open upon her, and heard the long-drawn sigh that indicated the return of consciousness.

Lord Montalban, and Silvester Langdale, and the Marquis of Milltown were in the room too, and when Augusta Montalban felt that her holy mission was ended, she fell upon the breast of her father, and her feelings found relief in a passionate flood of tears.

Augusta Montalban was gone before Marie Wingrave could be made conscious of the fact that she had been so carefully tended and watched by Lord Montalban's daughter; and when she was made acquainted with the fact, her woman's

instincts came up strongly within her, and she also found a sweet relief in tears that seemed to gush up from her very heart.

Conventionality and the forms of civilized life may deaden the feelings of the heart, and create false attributes therein; but, in spite of them, there are moments when the best instincts of our nature will triumphantly vindicate themselves in the possession which they, for a time, will hold of the entire soul.

The Marquis of Milltown remained with Marie Wingrave until she was sufficiently recovered to be removed, which was in the course of the same afternoon, and then he accompanied her to the nearest railway-station, and the same evening she was at her residence near to Kensington Gardens; and all the gentlemen of the hunt declared, that if the noble Marquis was not in love with

Marie Wingrave previously, he was madly in love with her from that moment.

The next day there was not the slightest trace of her accident perceptible in Marie Wingrave, and she was as gay and light-hearted as ever; but she and Augusta Montalban never met in the hunting-field again.

CHAPTER XV.

SILVESTER LANGDALE BECOMES ONE OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE.

SILVESTER LANGDALE returned to London dissatisfied. This may appear like a strange declaration, but yet it is founded upon actual fact. It is true, that the young barrister had now within his reach the means of gratifying almost any wish that he might form. He was courted and caressed by those of high estate; he had formed an attachment which there was every reason to believe—he believes it firmly—would be reciprocated. He was rising with almost miraculous rapidity in his profession, and yet he returns from

the circuit dissatisfied. He had been a portion of a brilliant circle in the country, he had been one of the guests at an ancestral hall, he had been in the midst of gaiety and pleasure, and he returned to—Gray's Inn. How different the feeling which actuated him from that which inspired him when unknown to the great world of London, without a friend who was resident in it, supported only by that great hope which is one of youth's bright blessings, he first took possession of the dreary chamber that looked out upon the tops of the elms that are the wonder of Gray's Inn Square. Why, if he had thought about that time, now that he has just returned from Lord Montalban's seat, he might with reason have become superstitious. He might have reasoned with himself that the dreary old place had the charm of luck about it, for upon its threshold good fortune had introduced

itself. True, the introduction had taken the form of a very terror in itself, and the means by which it had been accomplished seemed like a horror, or had done so once, when in thought he contemplated them.

But Silvester Langdale did not thus think when he returned from Lord Montalban's seat in the country, after the strange accident—for such it was considered—which had befallen Marie Wingrave. He thought only of the dingy chambers as he saw them, then presenting, as they did of course, a striking contrast to the spot he had so recently left.

It will be recollected that he became dissatisfied with his chambers in Gray's Inn almost immediately after his introduction to Augusta Montalban, and he then determined, on an early opportunity, to effect a change. Various circumstances, however, had conduced to prevent his carrying his resolution into effect until

now, when the desire became a determination.

It was something more than strange, it seemed like a fate, that whenever Silvester Langdale admitted to his desires anything respecting which prudence might perhaps suggest delay and deliberation, there appeared at his very side, like the embodiment of his hope, the form of one who now seemed interwoven with his destiny.

Silvester Langdale had not been sitting many minutes in his dim chamber, musing in the mood that we have indicated, when Marl Baskerville appeared to him.

How was it that this man seemed to know of every movement connected with Silvester Langdale and those with whom he now associated? This was a suggestion that had frequently occurred to Silvester Langdale himself, but he never,

when it did so, seemed to trouble his mind upon the matter.

"Strange termination to your visit," said Marl Baskerville, as soon as he had seated himself between the window and Silvester Langdale.

The observation was indefinite and vague in itself, but it seemed naturally to glide into the current of Silvester Langdale's thoughts, as it would seem from the reply he made.

"Ah, you mean this dungeon that I just now occupy?" he said.

"No, indeed I do not," replied Baskerville; "how should I? I see no association."

"You are quite right, nor indeed do I," said Silvester Langdale, and really he did so almost in a tone of bitterness.

Marl Baskerville noted the observation instantly in the tablets of his brain.

"I thought not of this room nor of

this locality when I made the remark,' he said; "I referred to the strange accident that occurred to Marie Wingrave."

"Why, how did you hear of that?"

Marl Baskerville did not answer the question, but put another.

"The Marquis of Milltown remained with her at the farmhouse and brought her to London?"

"Why, you know more than I do," said Langdale, laughing. "We certainly left him with others with the young lady, but I did not know that he accompanied her to London."

"I am on my way to call upon her soon," said Marl Baskerville.

"Indeed! Is not this rather out of your way?"

"Oh, no; I sometimes travel in circles."

"And may I ask why you have made this a part of the circles to-day?" Silvester Langdale inquired, laughing.

"I wished to see some one who had witnessed the event respecting which I am about to visit her."

"Why, what can be your interest in the affair?" Silvester Langdale inquired, smiling.

"My interest is peculiar, my object her advantage."

"That being so, I should be glad if I could satisfy your curiosity," answered Langdale; "but really beyond the fact that the accident occurred, I cannot give you any information. I did not even witness the accident—a common one, I believe, under such circumstances."

"Humph! I must learn it from herself, then," said Marl Baskerville, in a tone of communing with himself.

Silvester Langdale's mind had only for a time been turned from the object which was at the moment a small em-

barrassment to him, and so he said, turning the subject—

"But I am very glad that you have called upon me just at this time, for you are the very man I would have desired to see."

"The usual appeal, no doubt," Marl Baskerville thought; but speaking aloud, he said, "Indeed then, I am glad that I have accidentally called. How can I serve you? You know that I am ever willing to do so."

"Look around you, Marl Baskerville," said the young barrister.

He did so.

"These chambers are a kind of moral pall upon me; I must change them."

"I knew that you would come to such a resolve," replied Marl Baskerville, calmly; "and I would have suggested a change to you myself, but that it would have seemed like presumption."

"Presumption in you! Come now, that is rather too formal, and you know it, Baskerville."

"How can I serve or assist you?"

"You can advise me."

"Willingly."

"Nay, more, you can carry out my desire."

"Tell me how, and it is done."

"I do not desire to continue to be Silvester Langdale, of Gray's Inn."

"Silvester Langdale, of Lincoln's Inn, perhaps?"

"That is too small a removal."

"The Temple?"

"The Temple; yes."

Remarkable coincidence! Upon consideration Marl Baskerville had within his reach the means of gratifying the desire which the young barrister had at heart. The negotiation was easily made —negotiations with Marl Baskerville

always were; and so through the instrumentality of another chain, in two days the young barrister became Silvester Langdale, Esq., of the Inner Temple.

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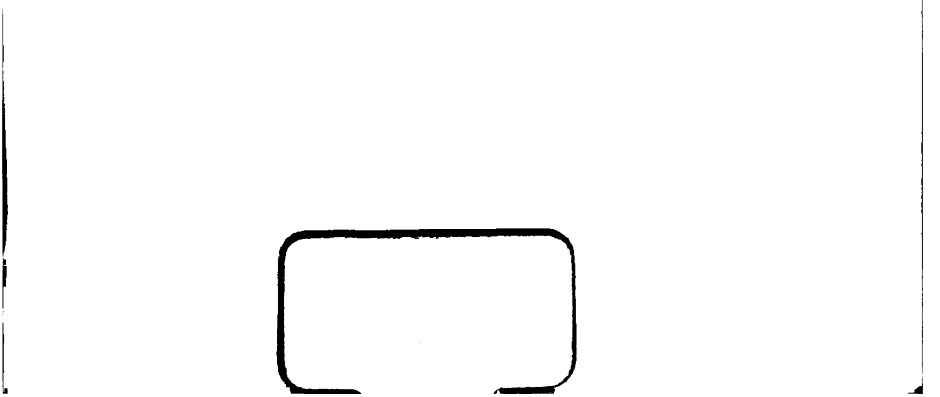
LONDON:
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS, CHANDOS-STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.